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Revitalized Gala Adds Spark to Super Bowl Week

THE

Winter 2010-2011

HUDDLE

An Official Publication of the NFLPA



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& SAFETY**

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the Impact p.10



Letter From the
Executive Director

Dear Team,

This has been a tremendous year for the NFL and its players. Thanks to the players, fans and the people who support this game, the 2010 season was the most successful in the league's history. The financial state of our league, by any indicator, is extremely healthy; sponsorships are up, attendance is steady and television ratings are at an all-time high. At the end of a remarkable season, it is wonderful to see how prosperous our game has become, and it is all thanks to you.

As important, I am proud to report that the state of our union is stronger than ever. NFL players—past and present—are building a new legacy of participation and ownership in matters relating to the business of football. They stand together as one with their families, friends and fans in a way unlike ever before.

The players and the league are facing uncertain times in the very near future. The players have been threatened with a lockout for the first time in the NFL's history. Given the current success of the game and what this means to our fans, this is staggering. The story is no different now than it was in March 2009, when I was entrusted with the role of executive director. In difficult economic times, people in America are still choosing NFL football over every other form of entertainment. Yet the owners insist that there is a "broken economic model" that needs "fixing"—and that a lockout is the "fix."

The NFL owners want the players to give more than \$1 billion back in the first year alone of a future collective bargaining agreement and play two more regular season games. The financial justification for the former is non-existent, and the health and safety questions regarding the latter remain unanswered. In short, the message from the owners to the players is clear: blindly accept, or else.

Players believe that there is a better way: a more perfect way to secure the future of our game. It is not through threats or through leverage, but through partnership. A partnership that brings with it financial transparency. A partnership that can reduce health and safety issues. And a partnership that can grow the game for future generations of NFL players and fans. Players not only want to play, but they also want a say in how the future of this game is secured. I am honored to help them facilitate that objective.

I am committed to the NFL players. I serve with their confidence and will retain the position of executive director as long as they wish to have me serve in this role. My efforts over the past two years have been based on one guiding principle: a leadership for the players by the players. This is where I belong as long as the leaders of this league will have me.

This edition of The Huddle is uniquely important. By the time it is published, we will be close to 30 days away from the expiration of the current CBA. It is critically important that you and your families understand what the issues are heading into a possible lockout.

In addition to reading The Huddle, I encourage players to stay informed about the NFLPA through our website, NFLPlayers.com, and through NFLLockout.com, the players' resource for NFL labor news. The players and I will do everything we can to secure a new deal. The players want to play, and we will work until the last second to ensure a fair agreement is reached.

Sincerely,
DeMaurice F. Smith

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 DeMaurice F. Smith

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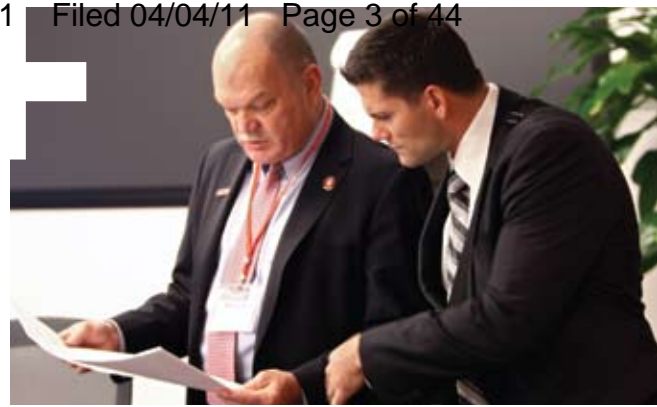
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ONE TEAM GESTURE

Demonstrates Player Solidarity

Players across the league raised their index fingers together during 2010 Kickoff weekend.

By Khalil Garriott



AP PHOTO

During 2010 Kickoff weekend, players on teams throughout the NFL showed their support for one another with a solidarity gesture prior to Week 1 games. It started before the Thursday night opener between the Minnesota Vikings and New Orleans Saints, when players from both teams took a few steps onto the field while raising their index fingers to show fans that they are “One Team” in their labor dispute with NFL owners.

The gesture was intended to show that the membership of the NFL Players Association is united in the face of a possible lockout following the 2010 season. The movement continued on Sunday of Kickoff weekend, with players at half of the 12 NFL afternoon games—including four-time MVP quarterback **Peyton Manning**—demonstrating their support of each other and of the union in its collective bargaining negotiations. In Houston, Jacksonville, Tampa, St. Louis, Seattle and Orchard Park, N.Y., players on both sides of the field held up their index fingers just after the National Anthem to show that the athletes are in this together.

“After watching the Saints and Vikings do it, it kind of sent chills down my body,” safety and NFLPA Player Representative **George Wilson** (Buffalo Bills) told *USA Today*. Others felt likewise, and on opening weekend in Orchard Park, home of the Bills, most Bills players stepped off the sideline and onto the field with their index fingers raised toward the Dolphins just before kickoff. About three-quarters of the Dolphins then did the same.

More than anything, the show of solidarity support brought awareness to the potential lockout that’s looming for the 2011 season. In many cases, player representatives and team captains across the league coordinated the demonstration by contacting the opposing team to gauge interest among players. Union leaders

in several locker rooms were completely on-board with the initiative.

“Even though five minutes from then we were going to go out and compete,” quarterback and NFLPA Executive Committee member **Drew Brees** said, players wanted to show “we’re all one voice.”

The move was an effective way of drawing attention to the potential lockout and the players’ cause. Not only did numerous fans take note of the gesture, but some also joined in. In addition, it served as a public message to owners that players are united in negotiations for the upcoming collective bargaining agreement, which threatens to derail the 2011 season. Estimates show that each NFL city could lose about \$140 million if there is no football next season.

Said guard and Player Representative **Steve Hutchinson**: “From a players’ standpoint, I know our way of thinking in the game was just to show everyone who cares to put their two cents in—that we are one as a players association.”

“

“After watching the Saints and Vikings do it, it kind of sent chills down my body.”

George Wilson

EXHIBIT A - Page 4

Left: Teams raised their index fingers after the National Anthem during opening weekend games to show solidarity across locker rooms. (AP Photo)
 Right: The New Orleans Saints and Minnesota Vikings did the symbolic action first at the Louisiana Superdome Sept. 9, 2010. (Kevin Koski/NFLPA)



One Team Tour Tailgates Spread the Word

Players, fans and union leaders get together in four cities to talk football and lockouts.

By Megan McCarty & Jilane Rodgers

The NFLPA took inspiration from one of the most loved football traditions, thanking fans with One Team Tour tailgates held in Green Bay, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and St. Paul, Minn., this past fall.

The tailgates provided an opportunity for players and fans to interact, and for fans to learn more about the potential lockout. Event speakers encouraged attendees to visit NFLLockout.com to get more information about the lockout and to sign a petition against the owners' decision to use it as a negotiation strategy.

"Players wanted the chance to thank the fans and the folks who work in the

stadiums," said Joe Briggs, NFLPA public policy counsel. "They wanted to show solidarity because a job is a job, and a worker is a worker."

Aaron Rodgers, Packers quarterback, spoke at the tour's first stop in Green Bay a day after being elected to the NFLPA Board of Player Representatives. He was accompanied by running back **Brandon Jackson**, Green Bay Former Players Chapter President **Charles Jordan** and several other former players.

"We appreciate your support," Rodgers said to the more than 300 fans in attendance. "It means the world to us."

The tailgate series also served as an invaluable opportunity for the NFLPA to inform political and labor leaders in team cities about the status of the collective bargaining agreement negotiations, Briggs noted.

"What we do is educate people on the business of football," he said. One of the tools the NFLPA is using in this regard is a study—based on numbers generated by the league, teams and team cities—which shows each community could lose approximately \$160 million in revenue if a lockout were to cancel the 2011 season.

Providing a real-life example of this potential, the tailgate event for Vikings fans was hosted at the Eagle Street Grille in St. Paul, Minn., an establishment that barely survived the 2004-2005 NHL lockout. To make rent, the owners were forced to lay off more than 95 percent of the staff. Eagle Street recovered once the season resumed, but the reality of the devastation caused by a professional sports lockout remains on the minds of the owners.

"The impact is so much deeper than what you see day-to-day," said owner Kevin Geisen. "That is why we were excited to host this event. We wanted to create awareness for both sides to come together for a resolution that works."

Dozens of former players, plus quarterback **Joe Webb** (who finished the season as the team's starter) and defensive end **Ray Edwards** attended along with Shar Knutson,

president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, and other leaders from the Twin Cities.

At the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia events—as with the first two events—attendees posed with players for pictures, won autographed helmets and jerseys and heard passionate speeches given by players, NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith and local, state and national leaders.

In Pittsburgh, a group of Steelers players—NFLPA Executive Committee Vice President and quarterback **Charlie Batch**, safety and Player Rep **Ryan Clark**, linebacker **Keyaron Fox**, running back **Mewelde Moore** and running back and Player Rep **Max Starks**, running back—along with several former players mingled with the crowd at the North Shore Saloon.

"We are trying to get things right and let the community know we want to play football," Clark said.

Tim Waters, political director for the Steelworkers union, also addressed the crowd with a statement of unity. "Our message is, 'We stand with the players of the Pittsburgh Steelers,'" Waters said. "We are going to fight together to hopefully get a deal and move this thing forward."

In Philadelphia, Eagles cornerback **Ellis Hobbs**, tackle and Player Rep **Winston Justice**, and Philadelphia Former Players Chapter President **Ron Davis** showed their appreciation to fans alongside several local and state leaders, including Arlene Holt Baker, AFL-CIO executive vice president, and Patrick J. Eiding, AFL-CIO Philadelphia Council president.

The event was held at Water Works Restaurant and Lounge, which provided free tailgate-style games, music and staple Philly cheese steaks.

"Water Works is proud to have hosted the NFLPA One Team Tour in Philadelphia," Owner Michael Karloutsos said. "In Philly, we are not only passionate about football and our Eagles, but we are equally passionate about keeping people working, whether they be players, parking lot attendants, or the guy on the corner of Pattison and Broad with the hot pretzel stand."

Karloutsos continued: "The idea of a work stoppage would benefit no one, especially us, the fans and business owners who support our team with unbridled passion. ...We say let them play."

For more information on the One Team Tour and other programs, contact the NFLPA Player Services and Development Department at 800-372-2000.

"The impact [of a professional sports lockout] is so much deeper than what you see day-to-day. That is why we were excited to host this event. We wanted to create awareness for both sides to come together for a resolution that works."

Kevin Geisen

EXHIBIT A - Page 5

2010 NFLPA Representatives

ARIZONA CARDINALS

Arizona Cardinals

Jay Feely	Representative
Hamza Abdullah*	Co-Alternate
Levi Brown*	Co-Alternate
Jason Wright*	Co-Alternate

ATLANTA FALCONS

Atlanta Falcons

Erik Coleman	Representative
Tyson Clabo*	Co-Alternate
Coy Wire*	Co-Alternate

BALTIMORE RAVENS

Baltimore Ravens

Derrick Mason	Representative
Matt Birk*	Co-Alternate
Chris Carr	Co-Alternate

BILLS

Buffalo Bills

George Wilson	Representative
Chris Kelsay	Co-Alternate
Brian Moorman	Co-Alternate

CAROLINA PANTHERS

Carolina Panthers

John Kasay	Representative
Jason Baker*	Co-Alternate
Steve Smith	Co-Alternate

BEARS

Chicago Bears

Robbie Gould	Representative
Rashied Davis	Co-Alternate
Hunter Hillenmeyer	Co-Alternate

CINCINNATI BENGALS

Cincinnati Bengals

Andrew Whitworth	Representative
Reggie Kelly*	Co-Alternate
Bobbie Williams	Co-Alternate

CLEVELAND BROWNS

Cleveland Browns

Robert Royal	Representative
Sheldon Brown*	Co-Alternate
Tony Pashos*	Co-Alternate
Benjamin Watson*	Co-Alternate

COWBOYS

Dallas Cowboys

Jason Witten	Representative
Bradie James	Co-Alternate
DeMarcus Ware	Co-Alternate

BRONCOS

Denver Broncos

Brian Dawkins	EC/Representative
Kyle Orton	Co-Alternate
Russ Hochstein*	Co-Alternate

LIONS

Detroit Lions

Kyle Vanden Bosch*	Representative
Jason Hanson	Co-Alternate
Julian Peterson*	Co-Alternate

PACKERS

Green Bay Packers

Aaron Rodgers*	Representative
Donald Driver*	Co-Alternate
Charles Woodson	Co-Alternate

HOUSTON TEXANS

Houston Texans

DeMeco Ryans	Representative
Matt Schaub*	Co-Alternate
Eric Winston*	Co-Alternate

COLTS

Indianapolis Colts

Gary Brackett	Representative
Anthony Gonzalez*	Co-Alternate
DeShea Townsend*	Co-Alternate

JAGUARS

Jacksonville Jaguars

Rashean Mathis	Representative
Jordan Black	Co-Alternate
Aaron Kampman*	Co-Alternate

CHIEFS

Kansas City Chiefs

Rudy Niswanger	Representative
Jon McGraw	Co-Alternate
Andy Studebaker*	Co-Alternate

Dolphins

Miami Dolphins

Ricky Williams	Representative
John Denney*	Co-Alternate
Brandon Marshall*	Co-Alternate
Chad Pennington*	Co-Alternate

VIKINGS

Minnesota Vikings

Steve Hutchinson	Representative
Jared Allen	Co-Alternate
Ben Leber	Co-Alternate

Patriots

New England Patriots

Tom Light	Representative
Tom Brady	Co-Alternate
Alge Crumpler*	Co-Alternate

SAINTS

New Orleans Saints

Jon Stinchcomb	Representative
Will Smith	Alternate

GIANTS

New York Giants

Shaun O'Hara	Representative
Zak DeOssie*	Co-Alternate
Kareem McKenzie	Co-Alternate

JETS

New York Jets

Tony Richardson	EC/Representative
Jim Leonhard*	Co-Alternate
Brandon Moore	Co-Alternate

RAIDERS

Oakland Raiders

Zach Miller	Representative
Ricky Brown	Co-Alternate
Bruce Gradkowski*	Co-Alternate

EAGLES

Philadelphia Eagles

Winston Justice*	Representative
Stewart Bradley*	Co-Alternate
Mike McGlynn*	Co-Alternate

Steelers

Pittsburgh Steelers

Ryan Clark	Representative
Antwaan Randle El*	Co-Alternate
Max Starks*	Co-Alternate

CHARGERS

San Diego Chargers

Nick Hardwick	Representative
Jacques Cesaire*	Co-Alternate
Jerome Clary*	Co-Alternate

49ERS

San Francisco 49ers

Takeo Spikes	Representative
Patrick Willis*	Co-Alternate
Tony Wragge*	Co-Alternate

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Seattle Seahawks

Chester Pitts*	Representative
Matt Hasselbeck	Co-Alternate
Lawyer Milloy*	Co-Alternate

ST. LOUIS RAMS

St. Louis Rams

Adam Goldberg	Representative
O.J. Atogwe	Co-Alternate
Mike Karney*	Co-Alternate

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Jeff Faine	Representative
Davin Joseph*	Co-Alternate
Maurice Stovall*	Co-Alternate

TENNESSEE TITANS

Tennessee Titans

Jake Scott*	Representative
Jason Babin*	Co-Alternate
Ahmad Hall*	Co-Alternate

REDSKINS

Washington Redskins

Vonnie Holliday*	Representative
Josh Bidwell*	Co-Alternate
Casey Rabach*	Co-Alternate

*New Rep



The NFLPA visited every team locker room during the fall, including this stop at the Minnesota Vikings practice facility Oct. 18, 2010. (Kevin Koski/NFLPA)



UNANIMOUS VOTE

Players have agreed to allow the union to become trade organization in case a new CBA isn't signed.

By NFLPA Communications Staff

Players made several major decisions during the NFL Players Association's visits to team facilities across the league last fall. In addition to voting for player representatives as they do every season, players were also asked to give the NFLPA permission to renounce its union status in case of a lockout. All 32 teams secured unanimous votes to pursue the option if a fair collective bargaining agreement cannot be signed by the March deadline.

If it comes to this, the NFLPA would no longer operate as a union, but, instead, as a trade organization. If the owners opt to lock out the players, the NFLPA could then sue the NFL on the players' behalf under U.S. antitrust laws, arguing that the NFL is conducting an illegal group boycott.

The NFLPA made a similar move in 1989, allowing former defensive lineman Reggie White to put together a class action lawsuit against the NFL. That eventually led the NFL to agree on a settlement with

the NFLPA—which, in turn, became part of the basis for the current CBA set to expire in March. The NFLPA voted to recertify as a union in 1993.

Moving forward this year, player reps will connect regularly via phone conferences to stay up to speed on issues relevant to their locker rooms until the conclusion of the post season. In addition, player reps and alternate player reps will convene at the annual meeting in March.

The 2011 meeting will mark the second joint session of the Player Rep Meeting and Former Players Convention.



“

All 32 teams secured unanimous votes to pursue the option if a fair collective bargaining agreement cannot be signed by the March deadline.

EXHIBIT A - Page 7

TWEET TWEET

Social media sites are becoming the place for NFL players to see and be seen.

By Mike Donnelly

NFLPA Manager of New Media Mike Donnelly offers insight to members as to the importance of building a social media presence.

If you work in the sports industry and you're not embracing social media, it's time to get with the program.

Pro athletes everywhere are streaming details of their lives online through the explosion of social media channels. Given the immense popularity of the NFL, it's no surprise that NFL players are among the most active athletes on Twitter, Facebook and the like.

The interactive nature of social media is its primary appeal. For players, communicating via social media sites offers an opportunity to raise their visibility, build their brands and correspond with

their fans. Their followers, meanwhile, gain all-new access to their favorite players and a more personal perspective on their on-field heroes.

"Social media has no doubt allowed me to be more engaged with my fans," defensive end **Conner Barwin** (Houston Texans) said. "It allows you to talk directly to them. It's a way to not only show fans more of your personality, but also to learn things about your fans."

The most popular social networking outlets among NFL players are Facebook—which enables users to post notes, photos, videos and web links for their "friends" and "fans" to peruse—and Twitter—a micro-blogging site that allows users to send instant 140-character messages to anyone who follows them. (Both are free to use.) Hundreds of players

have Facebook pages, and even more can be found on Twitter.

"What I like about Twitter is the immediacy of it and that it offers me a different way to interact with my fans in a short, concise way," tight end **Kevin Boss** (New York Giants) said. "I love hearing from my fans, and I feel like Twitter is a really easy way to do so. E-mail can be cumbersome and sometimes takes too long."

That's What He Said... on Twitter

Takeo Spikes: You guys can help block the lockout & spread awareness by following @nfllockout Sign the petition & make your voice be heard!!! (Re-tweeted by **William Gay, C.J. Spillman, LaMarr Woodley** and others.)

Ray Lewis: To all my Friends out there... Its playoff time and I'm Focused. I need you guys to sign the petition at... <http://fb.me/KEOHH8JZ>

Chad Ocho Cinco: Enjoy the playoffs, could be a while before we play again. NFL Lockout numbers <http://t.co/fiRuDM8> @forbes

Chad Ocho Cinco: RT @KevRieck: @ochocinco another example of the wealthy team owners not caring about it's players OR their fans! Greedy pricks!

Jermichael Finley: Everyone who loves the NFL, no matter the team, go 2 www.nfllockout.com and sign the petition to SAVE the 2011 football season! RT RT RT.

Mike Sims-Walker: RT @NFLlockout: Only #50days until CBA expires, go to NFLLockout.com & sign the petition to make your voice ... <http://tmi.me/5I7Lq> (Re-tweeted by **Cliff Avril, Kyle Bosworth, David Bowens, Justin Bushrod, Dustin Keller, Bobby McCray, Zach Miller** and **Alfonso Smith**.)

Jesse Nading: Get educated.. "@TakeoSpikes51: Here are the facts: click on the link below: <http://j.mp/eU7kZ8>" #Forbes

Phillip Daniels: RT @NFLPA We do too. Sign the Petition at NFLLockout.com. RT @super2510: @NFLPA I hope we have a 2011 season so we can top those numbers!

Dan Gronkowski: NFLLockout.com Everybody should really check this site out even if you don't want to sign Petition. A lot of great articles. (Re-tweeted by **Lance Ball**.)



Wide receiver Chad Ochocinco (Cincinnati Bengals) is considered one of the league's social media masters. (Photo illustration by Kevin Koski/NFLPA).

Most NFL players use social networking to express what's currently on their minds or to learn more about the people they're following. Other players tend to use it to promote community events and charitable causes that they support.

“

“Social media is a way to not only show fans more of your personality, but also to learn things about your fans.”

Conner Barwin

“My agents and I were able to do a lot of promotion this year for my ‘Giving Thanks with the Bossman’ contest through my Twitter and Facebook account,” Boss said, noting that the social media postings drew in a large response. Because he’s experienced the value of Twitter first-hand, he added, “I make sure I retweet any of my teammates’ causes or anything else I see as important.”

This attitude is spreading so widely that it’s no wonder that many people consider Twitter to be the new wire service and Facebook to be required daily reading. In today’s fast-paced society, media, fans and even players are more eager than ever to get player news quickly.

“

“I make sure I retweet any of my teammates’ causes or anything else I see as important.”

Kevin Boss

So if you haven’t yet opened those social media accounts, now’s a great time to get started. You can jump right in and start posting, or take it more slowly by creating a profile, following some other users and beginning to absorb the never-ending source of information available in the interactive world of social media.

NFLPlayers.com Expands Features

Podcasts, Live Chats and More Now Online

By Khalil Garriot

NFLPlayers.com, the official website of the NFL Players Association and its members, benefited from several enhancements in recent months. These upgrades include updated and searchable player charity/foundation information as well as fully functional RSS feeds.

The website also positioned itself as a news leader in the fall, when it broke the news that NFLPA President **Kevin Mawae** was retiring after a 16-year playing career.

Two other features added to the website recently are live chats and player podcasts. The new online chat series, launched in May, features active and former players taking questions and comments from fans nationwide, and responding to them in real-time in their own words. Among the topics players have chatted with fans about so far are the lockout, labor/CBA issues, on-field season storylines and the possibility of an 18-game season. (See pgs. 26-37.)

NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith hosted the first live chat in the new program. Players such as **Ray Lewis**, **Don** and **Matt Hasselbeck**, **Darrelle Revis**,

Floyd Little, **Cornelius Bennett**, **Eddie Royal**, **Christian Okoye** and **Eddie Kennison III**—just to name a few—have since hosted live chats on the site. Some chats have had timely themes such as Fathers Day, life as an NFL rookie, Hall of Fame inductions, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Veterans Day and foundation work.

Player podcasts, which can be found in the multimedia section of NFLPlayers.com, feature exclusive interviews with active and former players—including **Jack Youngblood**, **Archie Manning**, **Darren Sharper** and **Jeff Saturday**—about topics such as the Hall of Fame, kickoff of the 2010 season, player preparation for a lockout and more. A special series within the podcasts, dubbed the NFLPA Leadership Series, focuses on how players have become leaders on and off the field, and how they are helping other NFL players do the same.

Listeners can download the podcasts for free directly from NFLPlayers.com or via iTunes and can also use either site to subscribe to the NFLPA podcasts to keep us with the latest union-related news and NFL player updates.

A LOOK AT NFLLockout.com

This fall marked the launch of NFLLockout.com, a multipurpose website featuring an online petition to “Block the Lockout.” The main goal of the new site is to show NFL owners that fans care about preventing a lockout, and to remind fans they have a voice.

In addition to hosting the petition, the site updates fans and media on important labor issues via blog posts, fact pages and news clippings. Through these and other components like political cartoons and a message board, NFLLockout.com educates readers on why a lockout remains a real possibility.

The site also encourages visitors to follow lockout news at facebook.com/nfllockout and twitter.com/nfllockout, and provides links to both.

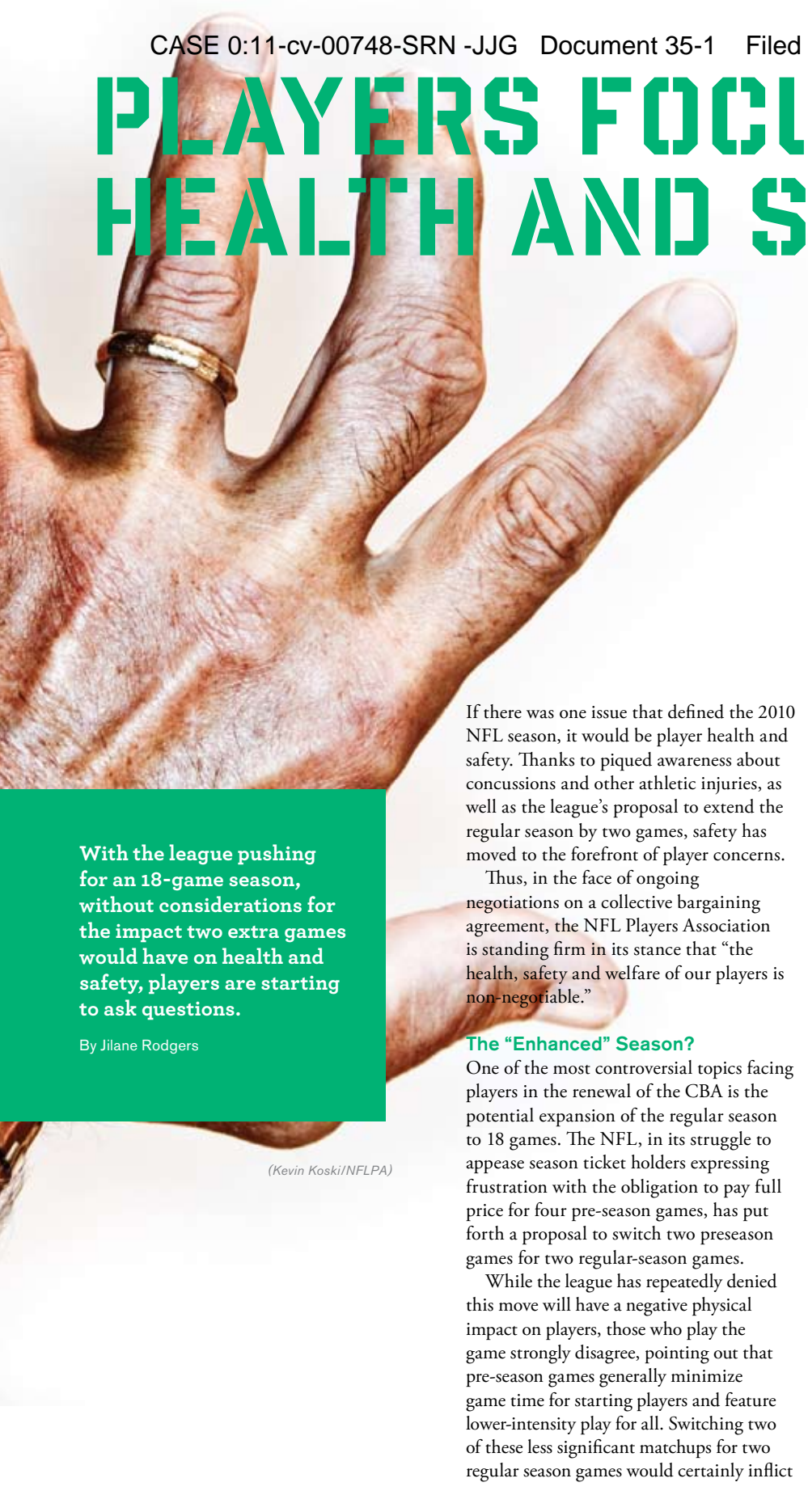


THE NFL'S LOCKOUT CHECKLIST

- ✓ ☒ Impose **lockout clauses in coaches' and executives' contracts** that give clubs the right to reduce compensation in the event of a lockout. Make sure to include language that will reduce, terminate, or suspend the contract on 20 days' notice, reduce salary by 50 percent if a lockout continues for more than 90 days, terminate the employee without pay on 60 days' notice, and extend the contract another year at the same terms as 2011 if at least eight NFL games are canceled due to a lockout.
- ✓ ☒ Retain Bob Batterman, veteran labor-relations attorney and orchestrator of the 2004-2005 NHL lockout, as outside counsel.
- ✓ ☒ Vote unanimously to **opt out of the 2006 CBA extension**, thereby terminating the agreement in March of 2011—two years early.
- ✓ ☒ Begin a strategic and premeditated course of action designed to reduce expenses by laying off 15 percent of our staff.
- ✓ ☒ **Support American Needle's request** to review American Needle, Inc. v. National Football League, et al., by the United States Supreme Court to obtain a broader ruling that would find the clubs and the league to constitute a single entity for antitrust purposes.
- ✓ ☒ Have Roger Goodell take a 25% pay cut at least through the 2008 season and institute a salary freeze for all league employees at least through the 2009 season.
- ✓ ☒ Pass a resolution allowing all NFL teams to opt out of a defined benefit pension plan for NFL coaches and executives.
- ✓ ☒ Get DirecTV to renew its deal to serve as the NFL's exclusive satellite carrier through the 2014 season. Deal should be worth at least **\$1 billion annually and right's fees** need to be paid to the league notwithstanding a lockout in 2011.
- ✓ ☒ Get Fox and CBS to renew their broadcasting rights deals with the NFL. The deals, which should be worth more than \$712 million a year from Fox and \$622 million a year from CBS, need to guarantee payment even if there is a lockout.
- ✓ ☒ Solidify war chest in the event of a lockout by **securing \$4.5 billion from TV networks even if games aren't played**.
- ✓ ☒ Hire former NFLPA President George Martin as President of the NFL Alumni Association—a newly created position.
- ✓ ☒ Hire former NFLPA President Troy Vincent as Vice President of Player Development for active players.

- ☒ **Reject the NFLPA's proposal to continue the current capped system for an additional year** despite the fact it could allow both parties ample time to complete work on a long-term CBA.
- ☒ **Reject the players union's proposal to keep playing** under an extension of the existing CBA. Five Times.
- ☒ Propose an 18-percent giveback of net revenue by the players to offset team costs.
- ☒ **End obligation to fund players' health care** in the event of a lockout.
- ☒ Negotiate contracts of the 2010 first-round draft picks to reflect the belief there will be a lockout in 2011 by changing the payment date of option bonuses from the first two weeks of the league year, which begins in March, to around the time the first regular-season game is played in 2011, whenever that may be.
- ☒ **Reject the NFLPA's proposal for a Proven Performance Plan** (rookie wage scale).
- ☒ Five months prior to the implementation of a lockout, inform employees of three-phase plan that will require many employees to take unpaid leaves of absences as well as pay cuts.
- ☒ Require banks lending to teams to extend the traditional six-month grace period for declaring a default to instead stretch through to the end of the 2011 season in preparation for a lockout.
- ☒ Propose an **18-game regular season** schedule in order to generate more revenue for NFL owners.
- ☒ Give at least \$600,000 in campaign cash to lawmakers, which could pay off during a looming dispute with the players union.
- ☒ Announce that we will stop providing health care for players and their families in March when the current CBA expires.
- ☒ Solidify war chest in the event of a lockout by building a \$900 million pool of money from savings from not paying player benefits.
- ☐ Offer an even worse deal to the players union as the deadline approaches.

PLAYERS FOCUS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY



With the league pushing for an 18-game season, without considerations for the impact two extra games would have on health and safety, players are starting to ask questions.

By Jilane Rodgers

(Kevin Koski/NFLPA)

If there was one issue that defined the 2010 NFL season, it would be player health and safety. Thanks to piqued awareness about concussions and other athletic injuries, as well as the league's proposal to extend the regular season by two games, safety has moved to the forefront of player concerns.

Thus, in the face of ongoing negotiations on a collective bargaining agreement, the NFL Players Association is standing firm in its stance that "the health, safety and welfare of our players is non-negotiable."

The "Enhanced" Season?

One of the most controversial topics facing players in the renewal of the CBA is the potential expansion of the regular season to 18 games. The NFL, in its struggle to appease season ticket holders expressing frustration with the obligation to pay full price for four pre-season games, has put forth a proposal to switch two preseason games for two regular-season games.

While the league has repeatedly denied this move will have a negative physical impact on players, those who play the game strongly disagree, pointing out that pre-season games generally minimize game time for starting players and feature lower-intensity play for all. Switching two of these less significant matchups for two regular season games would certainly inflict

additional physical burdens, they note.

"The average career is short as it is," said safety **Brian Dawkins** (Denver Broncos), a member of the NFLPA Executive Committee. Though he has been playing professionally for more than a dozen years, "these types of careers would become rarities" with a longer season, he predicted.

Sean Morey, co-chair of the NFLPA Mackey-White Traumatic Brain Injury Committee and an NFLPA Executive Committee member, addressed the issue of a potentially longer season during a TBI committee meeting in December. "It seems to me that increasing the exposure to head trauma is sort of counterintuitive to addressing this issue," he said. "I feel like you have to consider the law of diminished return—where the quality of the game might diminish because of players playing longer [seasons]. They might be playing injured, and star players might be on the sidelines, unable to finish their season."

Many medical experts—including NFLPA Medical Director Dr. Thom Mayer—echo Morey's comments. "It's hard for me, as a physician advising the players, to say, 'You're not going to have more injuries, including concussions, with a quarter of a million more snaps,'" he noted.

With team owners pressing for two more games a season, some players have expressed doubts about the league's concern for players. "I talk about the hypocrisy of the league, pretending they care about our health and safety," said linebacker **Scott Fujita** (Cleveland Browns), an NFLPA Executive Committee member. "If you care about our health and safety, then please prove it to us."

Fujita's comment addressed the NFL's recent move to fine players for helmet-to-helmet hits—a move made after members of the House Judiciary Committee criticized the league for its lack of accountability on head injuries like concussions.

“Maxine Waters, a congresswoman from California, said to the league, ‘You guys sound like the cigarette companies back in the 80s,’” Fujita recounted.

Six Extra Hurdles

Besides increasing the risk of player injuries, a longer season also could make it more difficult for players to receive health care coverage after retirement.

In order to qualify for five years of post-career health care, players must be vested—which requires them to accrue three or more credited seasons. A player earns a credited season if he is on the active roster, the injured reserve (IR) list or the physically-unable-to-perform list for at least three games during the season.

The average career of an NFL player is currently only 3.6 years, making the margin between the typical career and one qualifying for post-career health care already slim. Thus, players view two additional games per year as treacherous—an additional six hurdles to clear in order to earn the maximum five years of coverage.

“We put our bodies on the line, and we get five years [of post-retirement health insurance] to protect it afterward,” said safety **Domonique Foxworth** (Baltimore Ravens), a member of the NFLPA Executive Committee who was on IR during the 2010 regular season. “And then they want to tack on two more games, which is just going to multiply the injuries and the ailments that we’re going to see when we hit our 40s, 50s, 60s—70s, if we’re lucky.”

Adding to this point, Fujita noted: “The way the 18 games has been proposed so far has had no consideration for changing vesting requirements, with no consideration for players and post-career benefits—for making sure our players are taken care of in the long haul,” he said. “There are so many things now with player health and safety and the future welfare for us and our families that aren’t even being considered.”

Requesting the Data

In an effort to fully assess the physical toll two additional regular season games would take on its members, the NFLPA sent letters to all 32 teams on Jan. 10, requesting comprehensive injury data for the past five years. As the designated employee representative, the NFLPA has the right to access on-the-job injury

information per guidelines set forth by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

“We need consideration for the number of extra hits we will be taking, and the general wear and tear on our bodies and post-career insurance,” Foxworth noted. “The way we look at health care and health and safety would have to be completely overhauled.”

The NFLPA requested copies of OSHA 300 logs and OSHA 301 forms, which federal law requires employers to complete for all workplace injuries. While OSHA guidelines dictate employers must provide these forms to the requesting party by end of the next business day, the NFLPA granted clubs 30 business days for a response.

Injuries on the Rise

It’s common knowledge in the locker room that an NFL player risks injury every time he steps on the field. Even without adding two more regular season games, injuries appear to be increasing. With two more games, the numbers could be staggering.

“To me, 18 games, the way it’s being proposed, is completely unacceptable,” Fujita said. “I see more and more players getting injured every season.”

IR statistics lend credibility to this observation. During the 2010 regular season, 344 players were on IR at some point—50 more than in the 2009 regular season. (An additional 126 players were placed on IR and subsequently released, 20 more than in 2009.) Together, those 344 players missed a total of 3,278 games during the season (an average of 9.53 per player). The number is significantly higher than the

With team owners pressing for two more games a season, some players have expressed doubts about the league’s concern for players.



2,664 games IR players missed in 2009.

With numbers like those and without an adequate proposal to address health and safety concerns, the 18-game season is understandably a hard sell to the players.

“Right now there’s just not enough return on our investment to play another two games,” said linebacker **Mike Vrabel** (Kansas City Chiefs), an NFLPA Executive Committee member. “If it made sense, we could go back to our players and say, ‘Guys this is what can get for it.’ But I don’t think anybody in good conscience can go back into those locker rooms and say, ‘Guys this is all I can get for you for 18 games. Go out there, strap it up and I hope you make it through.’”

“We Want Everybody Covered”

Taking injury statistics into consideration and what they translate to for the game’s veterans, the NFLPA has already rejected what it called “a substandard proposal” from the NFL on long-term care for former players. NFLPA Senior Director of Benefits Miki Yaras-Davis believes the insurance company selected to underwrite the plan would decline coverage of football-related, preexisting conditions for many former players.

More Games, More Protection

ESPN reported in November that the NFL rejected the NFLPA’s good-faith counterproposal to an 18-game season. The counterproposal reportedly called for several modifications to address the greater player safety risks in an expanded season, including these:

- Reduce voluntary offseason workouts from the current 14 weeks to five weeks, or 20 days (four days a week, four-hour maximum per day).
- Significantly reduce contact between players during training camp, with

four practices a week consisting of helmetless and padless periods.

- Create two in-season bye weeks.
- Expand rosters from the current 53 to 56 or 57, in addition to practice squads.
- Increase prorated salaries for players under contract.
- Reduce the number of games players need to become vested to qualify for post-career health care and pension benefits.

How the Players See It

"Don't get me wrong, I love the game of football. If fans want to show their love, they should let everyone know that we are not machines. I've been blessed to play this game for so long, but it's time to start thinking about what legacy and impact changes like this will leave for the players of tomorrow and for us after we retire. I know our fans may not like preseason games and I don't like all of them, but swapping two preseason games for two end-of-season games—when players already play hurt—comes at a huge cost for the player and the team. I know our union is on top of it and players need to stay in touch with the union and our executive director to stay informed."

Linebacker Ray Lewis (Baltimore Ravens)

"I've taken part in several postseason runs where we have played 20 games. The long-term impact this game has on our bodies is well-documented. Look no further than the players that came before we did. Each player today has to play three years in order to earn five years of post-career health care. Our union has done a great job of raising the awareness on these issues and will make the right decision for us players, the game and the fans."

Quarterback Tom Brady (New England Patriots)

"We want everybody covered, not just a select few," Yaras-Davis said, explaining that the insurer seems likely to exclude too many former players between the ages of 50 and 75, even those who are in relatively good health. "It is our belief the company will reject them, meaning a significant number of healthy players would not be covered under the NFL's proposed plan."

This issue, along with the other health and safety concerns, is vital to players in the CBA negotiations. "We're not willing to budge on health and safety, and we'd like to gain some more ground in ways we can protect former players and current players," Foxworth noted.

Underscoring the point, NFLPA President **Kevin Mawae** emphasized that these concerns are not just coming from the players who serve as liaisons between the union and its members through positions on the Executive Committee or Board of Player Representatives.

"Being in the locker rooms, the message is always the same," Mawae said. "What's being done to get our deal done?" "What are they doing in terms of health care benefits and working conditions?" The biggest questions are not about how much more money we'll get, but whether we'll be able to have more than five years of post-career health insurance."

For more information, contact the NFLPA Benefits Department at 800-372-2000.

Do Fans Want an Extended Season? Not Necessarily!

Despite the NFL's claim that fans overwhelmingly want an 18-game season, public polls paint a different picture, as these recent surveys demonstrate:

Bleacher Report

"Should the NFL expand to 18 games?"

Yes: 45% No: 55%

Akron Beacon Journal

"Should the NFL expand its regular season to 18 games?"

Yes: 48% No: 52%

ESPN's Sports Nation

"What's a more important issue when it comes to the NFL schedule?"

Fan fatigue with 18 regular season games: 35%

Player fatigue with 18 regular season games: 65%

NinerNation.com

"Is an 18-game season a good idea?"

Yes: 53% No: 46%

SB Nation

"What do you think of an 18-game regular season schedule?"

**Love it: 43% Hate it: 32%
Don't care: 11% Not sure yet: 13%**

BaltimoreRavens.com

"How many games should there be in the NFL regular season?"

**16 games: 52% 17 games: 11%
18 games: 37%**

Chargers.com

"According to Goodell, you want 18 games. Well, do you?"

**Yes! 18 games! 17.19%
No, 16 games as it has been: 82.81%**

TwoBillsDrive.com

"Are you in favor of the NFL regular season schedule expanding to 18 games?"

**Yes: 37.21% No: 59.3%
Not Sure: 3.49%**

Stampede Blue

"18 games?"

Hell yes, more football is better football: 22%

Hell no, if it ain't broke, don't go fixing it! 73%

Hell no, the preseason is fun! 3%

ESPN's Sports Nation

"Do you want an 18-game regular season?"

Yes: 53% No: 47%

Bleeding Green Nation

"Do you agree with Roger Goodell's assertion that 'fans want less preseason and more regular season'?"

Yes: 32% No: 67%

Yahoo! Sports Blog

"Are you excited about the idea of an 18-game season?"

Yes, it's a great idea: 21%

No, it's a terrible idea: 70%

PatsFans.com

"Should the NFL increase the schedule to 18 games?"

Yes! More football! What could be better? 24.68%

No. The current schedule is good as is. Leave it alone: 75.32%

Groups Collaborate on the Issue of IMPROPER AGENT CONTACT

A panel comprised of representatives from all interested parties has teamed up to tackle the issue of improper agent contact with student athletes.

By Khalil Garriott

Working to find a solution to improper agent contact with student athletes, the NFL Players Association has been meeting monthly with representatives of the NCAA, AFCA, NFL and other stakeholders to discuss and address agent issues in football. The organizations kicked off the collaborative effort with a teleconference in August.

NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith said the union is open to all good recommendations that will help it remain vigilant in enforcing the rules governing agents.

Representatives from the NCAA staff, its member schools, the Collegiate Commissioners Association, NFL, NFLPA, American Football Coaches Association, state governments and the agent community have all been involved in these recent discussions. Together, the group represents the full range of perspectives on the issue of agent dealings with student athletes—which it hopes will increase the chances of developing successful educational and enforcement efforts.

Under the Uniform Athlete Agents Act—a model law that’s been enacted by most states—agents are only allowed to contact student athletes during certain periods of the calendar year, explained James Guidry, the NFLPA’s manager of collegiate affairs. A federal law also addresses agent contact, “but enforcement is an issue,” he added.

“[The NFLPA is] the only group that can really regulate the agents,” Guidry said.

“We have rules in place for how they can contact draft-eligible players and non-draft-eligible players.”

The union and the NCAA have sent letters to agents emphasizing that those who violate regulations will be subject to discipline and punishment. “We have a right to discipline them for improper conduct,” Guidry added. (See box for a look at recent cases.)

Improper agent activity with student athletes is an age-old problem that no single group or organization can solve on its own. Tackling the issue requires collaboration and cooperation among

all involved. While there have been previous conversations among some key constituents within the industry, these latest discussions mark the first time all of these stakeholders have come together to discuss this issue.

The goal of the panel is to identify opportunities for greater collaboration on topics such as enforcement efforts, potential post-NCAA financial penalties, best practices for the effective enforcement of state agent laws, educational efforts and an examination of the frequency and timing of agent contact with student athletes. A subcommittee of the interested parties is working to develop recommendations on establishing a common definition of an agent, as well as to examine the feasibility of creating a uniform agent recruiting calendar for institutions.

How the NFLPA Regulates Agents

Under the NFLPA Regulations Governing Contract Advisors, agents are held responsible for the actions of their recruiters, employees and associates if their conduct violates the regulations. The union’s Committee on Agent Regulation and Discipline (CARD) is responsible for oversight of these rules.

On Nov. 5, CARD issued a disciplinary complaint against NFLPA Contract Advisor Ian Greengross for violating numerous provisions of the NFLPA’s agent regulations while recruiting and representing players, and for the actions of his recruiter, Kenny Rogers. On Oct. 19, CARD voted unanimously to revoke the certification of Contract Advisor Josh Luchs. Luchs recently admitted to numerous violations of the NFLPA regulations, including making payments of money and/or other goods and services of value to college players at a time when the players’ college eligibility had not ended.



While there have been previous conversations among some key constituents within the industry, these latest discussions mark the first time all of these stakeholders have come together to discuss this issue.



Brandon Lynch works with the Wilmington College football team during his NFLPA/NCAA coaching internship. (Photo Provided)

COACHING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM Helps Members Transition From Player To Coach

The NFL Players Association/NCAA coaching internship program helps former NFL players build the skills and contacts needed to pursue a coaching career. While designed especially to serve those who may have limited coaching experience, the internship program offers all NFLPA members an exceptional opportunity to get a full season of experience at the college level under their belts and to build their coaching résumés.

Some recent interns share their thoughts about their experiences in the program here.

Gaining Exposure to Emerging Play Strategies

By Robert Holcombe

The NFLPA/NCAA coaching internship program provides a great opportunity for those of us who have decided on a career in football coaching to gain valuable experience. For me, the program was a way to polish my skills, experience the realities of being a coach and become a better teacher and a more effective communicator.

The process for applying for the internship is not difficult, but it helps to be persistent and to take some initiative.

Previously, I have interned for the New Orleans Saints and the Washington Redskins, where I was able to watch and learn from seasoned coaches. This past year, I was given the task of putting my skills to work as the running backs coach at Austin College. During my time there, I have been able to add to my overall knowledge of the game, as well as to learn more about myself as a coach.

“I now feel better prepared for my ultimate goal, which is to be a highly effective football coach.”

Robert Holcombe

While at Austin College, I was fortunate to be introduced to an emerging offensive scheme: the shotgun/spread option. Given that this scheme has become very popular at many high schools and colleges, I believe that my new knowledge and experience with it could prove helpful going forward in my coaching career.

My participation in the program allowed me to develop the tools I need to teach and reinforce the principles necessary for a player to perform at the highest level. As a result, I now feel better prepared for my ultimate goal, which is to be a highly effective football coach.

Finding a New Passion

By Brandon Lynch

I went into the internship program searching for the answer to the question, “What’s next for me?” While digging for that answer, I discovered a field that’s equally as challenging, demanding and exciting as playing professional football. It’s coaching.

My tenure in the coaching internship exposed me to much more than the Xs and Os of the game. I learned that being a good teacher and recruiter is not nearly as important as being a great mentor and an effective leader. Being fixated with the wins and statistics are neither equal to nor greater than developing a young man’s character and his will to win and be a champion in life.

“I learned that being a good teacher and recruiter is not nearly as important as being a great mentor and an effective leader.”

Brandon Lynch

The internship program also offered my family and me an in-depth trial run in the coaching profession to help us determine whether it would fit in with the dynamics of our family.

My family and I are extremely grateful to Wilmington College and Leslie Satchell at the NFLPA not only for providing me with the search engine to answer my question about my future, but also for helping me discover my passion for helping young adults strive to succeed.

Getting Back Into the Game

By Victor Johnson

I retired from the NFL in 1995 with the goal to eventually become a collegiate football coach. Pursuing coaching, however, would require me to relocate—which, at the time, was not conducive to my personal commitment to my wife and family. With newborn and 2-year-old daughters, I did not want to place the day-to-day responsibility for the girls on my wife alone.

Now that my daughters are older, I am ready to pursue the goal of coaching once again. I am currently involved in the NFLPA/NCAA coaching internship program as a tight end coach at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

The program has given me the needed experience to pursue a college coaching career, both offensively and defensively. While my NFL playing experience gave me an understanding of the

game, the NFLPA/NCAA program has given me the experience and relationships needed to coach on the collegiate level. I am now confident that my talents and abilities will be a great asset to any collegiate program.

“I am now confident that my talents and abilities will be a great asset to any collegiate program.”

Victor Johnson

My goal after completing the internship is to work full-time with a collegiate coaching staff, either as a linebacker/tight end coach or as defensive/offensive assistant. I am very excited about joining a program to develop young men both personally and academically, as well as to recruit and work football camps.

I am thankful to the NFLPA for its support of former players with the coaching internship. And I am excited about getting back into the game!

Making a Positive Impact on Students’ Lives

By Jimmy Williams

This was the second time I applied for the NFLPA/NCAA coaching internship, and I was adamant about having all of my ducks in a row for the application and submitting it in a timely fashion. The process involved some of the same things associated with applying for any job, but also requires an essay on “Why I want to pursue a career in coaching.”

When I was accepted, I really had no idea of what to expect, but I greatly looked forward to the start of what was to come. I quickly found that my players were great! I also learned that the simple fact that I had the NFLPA name attached to my title gave me that much more credibility with the staff and the players. Although there were some who seemed to feel intimidated by being around a former pro, I think their overall experience was enjoyable.

To be honest, there were some things I learned during my internship year that I will take with me in my coaching future, and some things that I will leave right where I found them. The experience taught me effective as well as ineffective ways of being a leader—especially when it comes to dealing with young men.

The reason I wanted to get into coaching from the start was not to produce professional players, but to make a positive impact in the lives of student-athletes. I feel that I achieved that goal 100 percent.

“The experience taught me effective as well as ineffective ways of being a leader.”

Jimmy Williams

My next goal is to continue building my résumé as a top-tier football coach who motivates, nurtures and develops young men who make positive contributions to society. Just stay tuned: There’s more to come from Coach Jimmy Williams from Vanderbilt University!

For more information on the NFLPA/NCAA coaching internship and other programs, contact the NFLPA Player Services and Development Department at 800-372-2000.

NFLPA Mackey-White TBI Committee Meets Taking Aim at Head Injuries

Players, medical experts and other stakeholders gathered with a common goal to make football safer at all levels of play.

By Khalil Garriott

Continuing its efforts to address brain injuries in football, the NFL Players Association Mackey-White Traumatic Brain Injury Committee met in December at the NFLPA's headquarters in Washington, D.C. The group focused on head injuries not only in the NFL, but throughout the game of football.

"It's not just an NFL problem," said **Sean Morey**, co-chair of the committee and NFLPA Executive Committee vice president. "It's the kids playing in the youth level, high school and college. Players feel respect and loyalty for each other; not just for their teammates and locker rooms, but for the community."

With the NFL asking for an 18-game regular season as part of the next collective bargaining agreement, the union will continue to ensure player health and safety remain paramount during negotiations, the committee noted. "It seems to me that increasing the exposure to head trauma is sort of counterintuitive to addressing this issue," Morey said.

One key topic the committee addressed at the December gathering is the return-to-play protocol after a suspected head injury—one of the most controversial and challenging issues surrounding NFL players. The committee is dedicated to educating the players it represents on the impact of brain trauma in an aim to change the culture in the game of football at all levels.

The NFL's Return-to-Play Committee reported on a Dec. 9 meeting with the NFL, noting it addressed ways to better protect active players, as well as the best tools and technology to diagnose and determine the severity of sports-related concussions.

Dr. Thom Mayer, medical director of the NFLPA and co-chair of the Mackey-White TBI committee, pointed out that most concussions occur without the person being knocked unconscious, making

proper assessment of all head injuries vital. That requires full buy-in from players, he noted. "The players must be involved in every step of the way," said Mayer, who sits on each of the six subcommittees comprising the NFL Head, Neck and Spine Committee.

Other topics covered included an update from the Equipment and Rules Committee on a Dec. 8 meeting with the NFL and an update on research of and services offered for former players.

Mayer was asked if he is pleased with the committee's progress in less than a year since its inception. "I'm not pleased; I'm delighted," he said. "That being said, it's time to hit the accelerator and drive this thing forward. In science, you are either moving forward or sliding backwards."

Other attending members included numerous esteemed doctors: three neurosurgeons, three neurologists, a neuropathologist, six neuropsychologists, two emergency physicians/team physicians and an NCAA team physician. A number of players, Consultant Chris Nowinski, players' wives and other invited guests also attended the committee gathering.

Clinton Portis (Washington Redskins) attended a Monday night committee briefing and former player **Kevin Turner** also attended the meeting. Turner, who played eight NFL seasons with the Patriots and Eagles, has ALS (commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease), which some scientists have linked to previous head injuries. He called the work being done on the issue "critical."

"We can get started now, so that five or 10 years down the road, the whole culture will begin to change," Turner said. "At least those guys will be more aware of what's going on and of the consequences of continuing to play concussed. That is our hope—that we can somehow nip this in the bud."

As the Mackey-White TBI Committee seeks to change the culture within locker rooms and on the field, it depends on players to do their part in taking brain injuries out of play.

"The reality is, playing in the NFL is not a civic duty," Morey said. "It's an opportunity for players to live their dreams and to have wonderful experiences in one of the most competitive areas in professional sports. I think it's so evident that our responsibility is to make sure that we advocate for the health and safety of all members—past, present and future."

For more information on the Mackey-White TBI Committee and other programs, contact the NFLPA Player Services and Development Department at 800-372-2000.



"Our responsibility is to make sure that we advocate for the health and safety of all members—past, present and future."

Sean Morey



(AP Photo)

ECHOES SHIRT

Raises Concussion Awareness and Research Funding

By Jilane Rodgers

The NFL Players Association and Muze Connects have joined forces to create the "Echoes" T-shirt to benefit concussion/traumatic brain injury research and awareness.

Every current NFL player received an "Echoes" shirt in his locker room early in the season and is encouraged to wear it to raise awareness about impact of concussions. The Echoes shirts—featuring the line from *Gladiator*, "What we do in life echoes in eternity"—are also available for sale to the public. All proceeds go directly to support brain injury research.

"The Echoes shirt provides our NFL players the ability to further impact the lives of other athletes in a profound way by helping to raise awareness of sports related concussions," said **Sean Morey**, member of the NFLPA Executive Committee and co-chair of the NFLPA Mackey-White Traumatic Brain Injury Committee.

"Purchasing an Echoes T-shirt demonstrates you stand with the players of the NFL to protect youth athletes and maintain the integrity of our game," Morey added. "By raising awareness and supporting independent research for sports-related concussions, we leave an enduring legacy that will impact the lives of others for decades to come."

Quarterback **Drew Brees** (New Orleans Saints), a member of the NFLPA Executive Board, gave the Echoes shirt and its message a big publicity boost when he sported the tee during his post-game interview after the Saints defeated the Vikings in the 2010 NFL Kickoff game.

"Given the support Muze Connects has received from so many NFL players, it is an honor to assist the NFLPA in raising money and awareness for such a critical issue," said Bill Deacon, founder/CEO of Muze Connects. "The issue of health and safety in sports touches all of us. We are thrilled to be a partner in this initiative."

To purchase the Echoes T-shirt or learn more, visit www.MuzeConnects.com/nflpa.



(Photo Provided)



A note from Sean Morey, NFLPA Executive Committee member and co-chair of the NFLPA Mackey-White Traumatic Brain Injury Committee ...

The NFL Players Association has been a leader in raising awareness of sports-related concussions in the past year, and NFL players have made significant contributions in an effort toward changing the culture in our locker rooms and on the field to manage concussions properly in our game.

Our NFLPA Mackey-White Traumatic Brain Injury Committee has been commissioned to educate and protect NFL players, support independent research and change the culture of how we manage brain trauma in our game.

Your brain is the most vital organ in your body. We must all share in the responsibility to help make our game safer for future generations. We must work together to change the culture and make this game safer. Here's how:

- Play hard, look out for teammates.
- Use your head, don't lead with it.
- Work smart, protect your future.
- If you have a concussion, don't hide it.
- Report it, and take time to recover.

With your support, our partnership will galvanize local communities all over our

country to work together to raise awareness about concussions. Please join our One Team effort as we build solidarity between the players of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Wear your T-shirt proudly to demonstrate and share in the solidarity across NFL locker rooms, supporting the effort to make our game safer.

Former NFL players have sacrificed so much to build this game. It is now our responsibility to protect football players on all levels and ensure the game we love is better for us having been a part of it.

Players Promote Breast Cancer Awareness

As ambassadors for the NFLPA's One Team for the Cure, DeAngelo Williams and Bradie James are working to get the word out about early detection and prevention.

By Megan McCarty

As part of October's Breast Cancer Awareness events, **Bradie James** (Dallas Cowboys) and **DeAngelo Williams** (Carolina Panthers) were named ambassadors for the NFL Players Association's One Team for the Cure. Breast cancer has impacted both of their lives, and each has dedicated himself to spreading messages about early detection and prevention.

"It is awesome to be recognized for what you are doing," Williams said in response to the honor. "I love being able to use football as a platform to make a difference." The point he's tried to convey to the public is simple, he noted: "It's important to get exams and see your doctor on a regular basis."

Williams' mother has battled the disease twice since being diagnosed six years ago. His aunt is also a breast cancer survivor. The experience of seeing loved ones fight this disease has helped him realize his connections to breast cancer run even deeper.

"I just had a baby girl. This is something that will affect her and my wife as women," Williams said. "It impacts almost everyone directly and indirectly."

To help raise awareness about breast cancer—and raise funds for cancer research—Williams has twice participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Charlotte. The "Williams Warriors," his team of 575 people, raised \$40,000 for the Komen Foundation in 2009.

James, the second ambassador for the NFLPA's One Team for the Cure, has also been directly affected by breast cancer. When he was only a sophomore in college, his mother passed away from breast cancer (shortly after the death of his father).

"I didn't know anything about breast cancer then," James said. "So initially, I shied away from talking about it. Then after about four years in the league, I decided that needed to change. I learned really quickly that I could be a big help to this cause because of the platform football gives me."

James started his "Foundation 56" in honor of his mother, with a goal to build

awareness about the disease—among men as well as women.

"We're trying to get men involved. If you have a wife, a mother, a sister," it affects you, he said. "As a man, you can support the women in your life, even if they have not been diagnosed. You can encourage them to get their regular mammograms, go to the doctor regularly, and ask questions. If they are diagnosed, you can support them in so many ways, especially when they have to return for treatment."

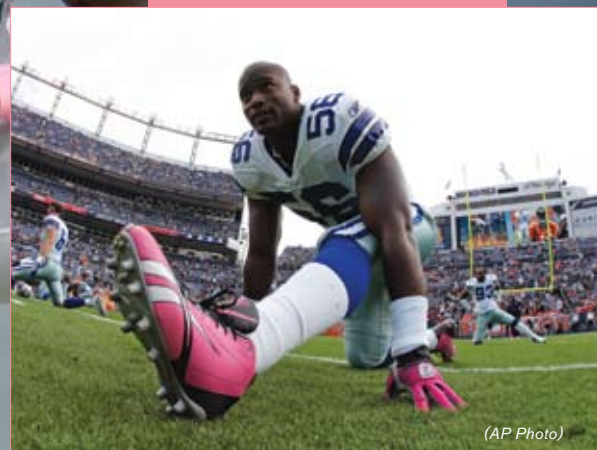
Foundation 56 is also dedicated to expanding medical care to detect and treat breast cancer. In October, the foundation helped to open the Bradie James Breast Cancer Resource Center at Dallas Methodist Medical Center, which provides disease screening, education and support.

In addition to these individual player efforts, all NFL teams actively promoted Breast Cancer Awareness month by wearing pink apparel and accessories during games, having members of Zeta

“

"I love being able to use football as a platform to make a difference."

DeAngelo Williams



(AP Photo)

Tau Alpha distribute pink ribbons at games, and participating in Susan G. Komen and American Cancer Society fundraisers. Further, all the pink game-worn accessories and apparel were donated to an NFL auction benefiting the American Cancer Society.

NFL players even inspired youth football players around the country to show their support for Breast Cancer Awareness Month by wearing pink during their own football games. As one example, the Poquoson Bulls, a youth football team from the small town of Poquoson, Va., chose to follow their idols and go pink. The group of 8- and 9-year-old boys wore pink socks, pink tape around their shoes, pink shoelaces and helmets adorned with pink ribbon stickers during the month of October.

Yvonne Parks, whose son plays for the Bulls, thought it was special that the boys decided on their own that they wanted to support the cause. "The NFL does make a difference in our lives," she said.

WIVES IN THE KNOW

The NFLPA is keeping spouses and significant others informed about CBA negotiations and the implications of a lockout through a series of special forums.

By Heath Smith

PLAYERS' WIVES TOP CONCERNS

no specific order

HEALTH CARE &
OTHER BENEFITS

CBA NEGOTIATIONS
& LOCKOUT
POSSIBILITY

WHAT HAPPENS TO
FREE AGENTS IN
A LOCKOUT

RENUNCIATION
OF UNION STATUS

PLAYER
SAFETY

While the NFL Players Association has worked tirelessly to make sure all NFL players are preparing themselves for the possibility of a lockout, the union has also made it a priority to ensure players' wives are armed with the information they need as well.

NFLPA Deputy Managing Director and Special Counsel Executive Teri Patterson has been reaching out to NFL wives this season to give them an opportunity to discuss how a lockout by the NFL owners could affect their families. As part of that communications strategy, Patterson has held meetings in five different team cities and chaired a national conference call in October to discuss the collective bargaining agreement and lockout-related issues. In addition, she has spoken personally on the phone with more than 150 wives on a variety of topics vital to their households.

"The CBA negotiations and impending lockout are important issues that could impact not only the players, but their families as well," Patterson said. "Wives play a major role in the lives of the players, so we felt it was very important they be aware of what is going on and what they need to help their husbands prepare their families for if there is a lockout."

Patterson said the wives she has spoken with have had questions both about general issues, such as the current status of CBA negotiations, and specific situations, such as the legal implications of union decertification and the status of health care benefits during a lockout.

Those who participated in the forums came away with critical knowledge. "The more information we are armed with, the better prepared we are to tackle any pressing issues that may affect our families," said Kaye Cole, wife of defensive tackle **Colin Cole** (Seattle Seahawks). "There

are times wives miss out on important information distributed by the NFLPA so conducting a special meeting is a great way for the NFLPA to keep us informed."

One of the major CBA issues Patterson has briefed wives on is the call to expand the regular season by two games, bringing it to 18 games.

"I think they are calling it an enhanced season, but the players I've talked to aren't calling it enhanced," Patterson explained to a group of wives at one of the gatherings, held in Cincinnati. "You live with these men. You see them when they come back Sunday or Monday. Tuesday they may get a chance to rest, but Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday it is pain on their bodies."

NFLPA Senior Director of Benefits Miki Yaras-Davis also attended the meetings to inform the wives on how a lockout could affect benefits such as medical insurance. It is an issue Patterson said tops the list of the wives' concerns.

"Many of the wives and other significant family members are concerned about the interruption of health insurance benefits," Cole said. "Many of us have children or are with child." Availability of health benefits for the players themselves—their husbands—is equally critical, she added. "They may have injuries or health concerns that may require medical treatment in the off season. This affects us all."

In addition to holding these meetings, the NFLPA has established family liaison representatives to keep wives and other family members updated specifically on CBA negotiations.

"Our players' wives are just as concerned [as their husbands] about what is going on," Patterson said. "We are committed to doing everything we can to keep them informed."

"Many of the wives are concerned about the interruption of health insurance benefits."

Kaye Cole, wife of Colin Cole



TRAVEL BENEFITS

NFLPA members can take advantage of a host of affinity program benefits designed specifically with players in mind. These include several new—and not-so-new—travel and housing programs detailed here.

By Kerry Cosover

Corporate Housing Offers Short-Term Leases

The NFL Players Association has begun an innovative new

partnership with BridgeStreet, a global provider of residences, serviced apartments and suites. With multiple locations within miles of all team practice facilities, BridgeStreet accommodations allow NFLPA members to establish a temporary home in a new city quickly, efficiently and without the hard costs traditionally associated with setting up a new household.

In addition, this new program enables players to avoid long-term lease requirements—an important financial consideration in case of a work disruption or potential transition to a new city.

- + Some other important features of the corporate housing program:
- + Despite today's challenging credit market, this groundbreaking NFLPA program streamlines the ability of all players to qualify, regardless of work history or contract status.
- + BridgeStreet will soon launch a web portal fully dedicated for NFLPA members to research, apply for and secure temporary housing.
- + NFLPA members will receive a 10-percent discount on the current market rate for each confirmed reservation.
- + BridgeStreet offers guests a virtual concierge, available 24/7.

"Travelers are seeking hotel alternatives that allow them a richer, fuller life experience while on the road, and our product offers a unique familiarity of home that hotels cannot," noted Lee Curtis, president of BridgeStreet. "We look forward to welcoming NFLPA members to the spacious ease of a BridgeStreet apartment during the upcoming year."

For more information on this new benefit, contact Kerry Cosover at 202-756-9103.



Players Get Discounted Moves

A one-stop solution for all moving relocation needs, Moyer and Sons has partnered with the NFLPA to offer members special rates on a range of moving and storage services.

Unlike traditional moving companies, Moyer and Sons operates under a singular management structure, assuring accountability during all phases of a move. From the drivers to the handlers, truck maintenance to storage, Moyer and Sons manages all aspects of the business, as it has for more than four generations. The company is fully licensed and insured.

Moyer and Sons offers the following services nationwide:

- + packing materials and packing service, including wardrobe service
- + additional protection (such as padding and custom-built crating) for oversized or fine furniture and fragile items
- + enclosed automobile transportation
- + disassembly and reassembly of beds and other furniture items
- + palletized storage for all household goods
- + secured open storage for large items such as pianos and mowers
- + secured open rug rack storage
- + closed secured storage facilities with video surveillance

For more details or to receive an initial quote, contact John Moyer Sr., John Moyer Jr. or Jose Rector at 800-726-1817 or move@moyerandsons.com. Mention NFLPA, and save up to 50 percent on each move.



Know Before You Go: International Travel Risk Reports

Planning an international business or leisure trip? The NFLPA travel manager, in conjunction with the union's security director, now conducts no-cost travel threat assessments and travel safety reviews for players and their immediate families. These assessments are based on consultations with the State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council, iJet (a corporate risk management intelligence agency) and the Transportation Security Administration.

The comprehensive NFLPA travel-risk reports outline current country-specific travel warnings, city- and county-specific crime reports, document requirements, recommended immunizations, details on local medical assistance and contact information for U.S. Embassy/Consulate office locations. As part of this complimentary service, the NFLPA also will ensure all programs participants' travel itineraries and hotel information are registered with the appropriate U.S. Embassy.

For more information, contact Kerry Cosover or Tim Christine at 800-372-2000.



EXPANDED

Player Transportation Link: Confidential Transport Available 24/7

Player Transportation Link offers NFLPA members confidential transportation services designed to ensure that players reach their destinations safely and on-time, saving them from costly fines and far worse. PTL begins billing at the agreed-upon pickup time and the driver remains on duty until passengers arrive safely at their final destinations.

For details, contact PTL 24/7 at 800-203-4731.

Car Rental Discounts Available

The NFLPA has negotiated deep discounts with six car rental companies: Avis, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz, National and Thrifty. In addition, members are entitled to complimentary enrollment in each rental firm's preferred rental club.

For more information, log in to the Member Services section of NFLPlayers.com.

Travel Agency Offers Vacation Savings

World Travel Inc.—the NFLPA's exclusive travel management company—combines its buying power and preferred consortium rates with standard NFLPA travel discounts to offer players discounted cruises, honeymoons, tours and specialty travel packages.

In addition the agency waives all service fees for vacation packages and cruises booked by NFLPA members.

For more information, visit worldtravelinc.com/vacation. To start planning a trip, contact the appropriate World Travel office:

- + for vacation packages, 800-451-5449 or vacations@worldtravelinc.com
- + for cruises, 800-874-6700 or cruises@worldtravelinc.com

World Travel's Leisure Department is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET and on Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon.



Get a Room for Less

The NFLPA has partnered with some of the world's top hotel brands—including Fairmont, InterContinental and Hilton—to offer value-added benefits such as discounted rates, room upgrades and other amenities at locations across the country.

For more information on these and other hotel discounts, check out the Member Services section of NFLPlayers.com.

In addition, members can learn about current AFL-CIO hotel boycotts and preferred union-friendly properties at unitehere.org.

Additional Travel Services

For additional travel benefits and services, visit unionplus.org/union-plus-travel-center.



Background Checks Protect People and Property

Corporate Security Solutions Inc.—a nationwide full-service private investigative agency—provides NFLPA members with discounted background investigation services designed to protect players, their families and their assets. Players can order background investigation reports on individuals or businesses at the group rate of \$100 each. CSSI will generate a same-day electronic dossier report covering criminal records, sexual offenses, driver's license information, bankruptcies/liens/judgments, motor vehicle registrations, UCC filings, address history, properties owned and professional licenses.

To contact CSSI, call 800-203-4731.

NFLPA & Sig Sauer Academy Present Responsible Handgun Training

New two-day education program aims to ensure firearms are used safely and legally.

By Tim Christine

The NFL Players Association has partnered with the Sig Sauer Academy to develop a two-day handgun training program for all members interested in learning about best safety practices as well as the many legal issues connected to handgun ownership.

While the league may discourage handgun ownership and prohibit firearms from NFL property and events, the NFLPA is offering this program to ensure that those players who choose to own handguns for personal protection or sporting purposes have the knowledge and skills needed to be safe and responsible owners.

Led by certified staff from the Sig Sauer Academy, the training is designed to protect players and their families from safety-related accidents. It also will provide expert instruction and guidance on legally purchasing, registering and licensing handguns in accordance with laws in the states and municipalities specific to each student.

Because laws governing handgun ownership, possession, registration,

transportation, sale and transfer vary among jurisdictions, the NFLPA Security Department and the Sig Sauer Academy consulted with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as well as state and municipal law enforcement agencies, in the development of this unique program.

The Sig Sauer Academy trains law enforcement and elite government agencies around the world, using its internationally recognized training techniques, which include required training in use of force. One in three police officers in the United States chooses Sig Sauer for firearms and tactical training.

The NFLPA held a pilot training class over the summer, inviting current and former players to the Sig Sauer Academy in Epping, N.H. **Matt Light** (New England Patriots), **Troy Nolan** (Houston Texans) and former players and NFLPA staff **Don Davis** and **Scott Turner** participated. Each student was paired with an individual instructor, and all students were trained using identical Sig Sauer-supplied firearms, safety gear and other supplies.

The pilot course covered the following core areas of instruction:

- + handgun familiarization, orientation and safe handling procedures
- + classroom and range proficiency
- + legal ammunition
- + safe cleaning procedures
- + home safety, including child safety
- + use-of-force laws
- + legal transportation of firearms
- + concealed weapons laws
- + the NFL firearms policy

"I am delighted this program is now available to our members," said NFLPA Executive Director DeMaurice Smith. "If you choose to own firearms, you as players and businessmen have an obligation to be informed, safe and in compliance with all state laws associated with responsible firearms ownership."

The Sig Sauer Academy will offer NFLPA regional training classes during the off-season in April and May at Sig Sauer facilities in Los Angeles, Orlando and Epping, N.H.

For more information regarding this program, contact the NFLPA Director of Security at tim.christine@nflplayers.com.



(Photos Provided)

"The Sig Sauer Academy really had a huge impact on me. I really gained a lot of valuable information from this two-day program."

Troy Nolan

"There was such a level of professionalism and expertise that permeated from the time we started until the program was over. Sig Sauer's number-one message that instructors repeated over and over again throughout the program was safety, safety, safety."

Don Davis

"The instructors at the Sig Sauer Academy were excellent in their skill set as well as their ability to teach students. I came to the realization that the training is paramount for anyone who wants to use a firearm properly."

Scott Turner

EXCLUSIVE ALZHEIMER'S HELPLINE

Connects Players With Information and Services

By NFLPA Benefits Staff

The Alzheimer's Association and the NFL Players Association have partnered to create a 24/7 helpline for active and former players and their family members seeking information and support about the disease.

The helpline is staffed around the clock to offer:

- + confidential care consultation from professional clinicians who can help with decision making support, crisis assistance and education on issues families with Alzheimer's face
- + referrals to local community programs and services, as well as ongoing support
- + information about memory loss, dementia, brain health and Alzheimer's disease, along with strategies to reduce care-giving stress
- + safety materials and services, including details on the MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® program

Players and their families can access the Alzheimer's Association/NFLPA 24/7 Helpline at 877-385-4535.

10 WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

Source: www.alz.org



SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER

By Jilane Rodgers & Rebecca Otto of Octagon Football

Here's a glimpse at some of the ways NFL players served their communities during the season of giving.

Octagon Football and the athletes it represents spent the holidays bringing cheer to communities across the country with generous community service days. Here are a few examples of how these NFL players gave back during the holiday season.

Justin Tuck, Terrell Thomas and Michael Boley (New York Giants) teamed up with Westfield Garden State Plaza to host a toy and book drive in Paramus, N.J. All of the donations collected benefited the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bergen County, N.J., and Tuck's R.U.S.H. for Literacy.

Marshawn Lynch (Seattle Seahawks) and his family hosted its Fourth Annual Family First Turkey Drive at Oakland Technical High School (Lynch's alma mater), giving away more than

275 turkeys to families in need in California's Bay Area. Shell Lubricants provided side dishes to complete the meals. In addition, 106.1 KMEL came out with music and giveaways during the distribution event, and the Salvation Army served snacks and refreshments.

Jameel McClain (Baltimore Ravens) sponsored full holiday meals for 53 families in the greater Baltimore region and **Charles Godfrey** (Carolina Panthers) contributed meals for 30 families in the Houston area over the holidays. Each family received a basket complete with a turkey or ham and all of the holiday trimmings. In addition, McClain and Godfrey each spoke to the recipient families about his journey to the NFL.

Players across the country brought cheer to their communities during the holiday season. (Photos Provided)



Players partnered with FedEx to host toy drives in two cities to bring cheer to local children's hospitals. The players were on hand sign autographs for fans donating new toys at these events:

+ **Ziggy Hood, LaMarr Woodley** and **Dennis Dixon** (Pittsburgh Steelers) teamed up at The Mall at Robinson to benefit the Child Life Department at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh. The drive collected more than 900 toys.

+ **Marcus Trufant, Justin Forsett, Marshawn Lynch** and **Aaron Curry** (Seattle Seahawks) joined forces at the Westfield Southcenter Mall to benefit Seattle Children's Hospital. The drive brought in more than 600 toys.

In three cities, players joined up with Toys 4 Tots, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and Toys "R" Us to give children the chance to shop with their NFL heroes:

Leon Hall, Cedric Benson, Morgan Trent and **Brandon Ghee** (Cincinnati Bengals) teamed up to support the Children's Home of Northern Kentucky. The players donated their time to sign autographs and shop with the 12 kids that were selected for the spree. More than 70 other youth at the Children's Home also received toys through the program.

Brandon Pettigrew, Jerome Felton, Lawrence Jackson, Maurice Morris and **Nathan Vasher** (Detroit Lions) worked together to support the Boys & Girls Club of S.E. Michigan, benefiting more than 250 children.

Thomas DeCoud, William Moore, and Dominique Franks (Atlanta Falcons) joined forces to support the Boys & Girls Club of Metro Atlanta. This event served more than 170 children.

For year-round information on player community events, check NFLPlayers.com.



The players' well-wishes reached more than 14 million viewers during the holiday season.

Players Send Holiday Greetings to Troops

By NFLPA Player Services Staff

For most people, the holiday season is a time to be with loved ones, spending quality time together as a family. For others, the priority may quite different, like protecting and serving their country.

Players from the Washington Redskins, Pittsburgh Steelers and Baltimore Ravens recently voiced their appreciation for these sacrifices in a series of video holiday messages broadcast to members of the armed forces.

"There is no doubt every player we spoke to was more than willing to thank the members of the armed forces for their service," said NFLPA Manager of Player Services Willis Whalen.

"The players truly appreciate the sacrifices our military makes for them and their families."

More than 40 NFL players gave their time to record holiday messages to the U.S. Army during November and December. The

players were asked to speak from the heart in their messages to the men and women who defend America and keep its people safe.

The players' well-wishes reached more than 14 million viewers during the holiday season. Army Sgt. Earl Scott and Sgt. Deyane Moses, who recorded the sessions for Army Now Radio and Television, took away something special from their participation. "Meeting the Washington Redskins players was the best day of my life," said Moses.

For players like defensive end **Brett Keisel** (Pittsburgh Steelers) who have relatives active in the military, this project was a natural fit.

"To the men and women of all armed forces, I thank you sincerely from the bottom of my heart for protecting our rights and our country," Keisel said in his message. "I appreciate it, as I have family members in the military. I just want you all to know we love you back home, and we are excited for your safe return."

Hines Ward Nominated for U.N. Peace Award

via www.celebratepositive.com

Wide receiver **Hines Ward** (Pittsburgh Steelers) has been nominated for the first annual United Nations NGO Positive Peace Awards in the professional athlete category. This award—viewed as a 21st century peace prize—honors and recognizes individuals, businesses, athletes, sports teams, entertainers and schools around the world for positive contributions to their communities.

The Pittsburgh Steelers also received a nomination, in the professional sports team category.

Ward's nomination is in recognition of his work toward changing the perception of the biracial population in Korea. His involvement in this issue has attracted influential Koreans to join him in this effort.

"Hines Ward changed the cultural landscape of Korea," said Janet Mintzer, president/CEO of Pearl S. Buck International Inc., the organization that nominated him for the award. "After Japanese invasions, Korea placed high value on being pure-blooded Koreans, creating prejudice of biracial people. As a successful biracial Korean-American, he returned to Korea, creating media attention that has sparked a cultural shift."

The inaugural Positive Peace Award nominees will be judged by a voting academy comprised of representatives of three of the U.N.'s most respected non-governmental organizations: Rotary International, Pathways to Peace and Sister Cities International. The voting academy will examine nominees' community involvement and impact on their community to determine the winner in each category.



(Kevin Koski/NFLPA)



Ward's nomination is in recognition of his work toward changing the perception of the biracial population in Korea.

Players and NFLPA Support Native Vision Gala

"Evening With the Stars" Benefits American Indian Youth

By NFLPA Communications Staff

For the 15th consecutive year, the NFL Players Association and the Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health partnered to host the "Evening With the Stars" gala to benefit Native Vision, a nonprofit initiative which mobilizes professional athletes to serve as mentors to American Indian youth. NFL great **Brian Mitchell** served as master of ceremonies for the event, held on Dec. 3 at the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C.

Joanne Shenandoah—a Wolf Clan member of the Iroquois Confederacy and highly acclaimed singer, songwriter, actress, educator and lecturer—entertained the gala's nearly 300 attendees. Shenandoah is Grammy-award winner and 12-time Native American Music Award-winning artist.

Event speakers included Jodi Gillette, associate director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and deputy associate director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, as well as **DeMaurice Smith**, NFLPA executive director. Former NFL players **John Booty**, **Tom Carter**, **Don Davis**, **Clark Gaines**, **Nolan Harrison**, **Kenneth Jenkins**, **Nick Lowery**, **Keenan McCardell** and **Rodney Scaife** showed their support by attending the gala.

The "Evening With the Stars" featured an auction of unique sports memorabilia and packages, including an all-expenses-paid trip to Super Bowl XLV, to benefit Native Vision camps nationwide.

Since its inception, Native Vision has served more than 5,000 youth, 2,000 families and 25,000 Native American community members.

NFLPA GAME SERVES AS COLLEGE ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

NFL personnel are set to scope out this event in search of draft-eligible seniors ready for the next level of play.

By NFLPA Communications Staff

Overtime Sports Group LLC and the NFL Players Association are partnering this year to bring a college football all-star game to San Antonio's Alamodome on Feb. 5.

The NFLPA Game, as it is titled, was previously known as the Texas vs. The Nation Challenge and was held in El Paso, Texas. The players—consisting of top college athletes from universities coast to coast—showcase their skills to NFL personnel in the hopes of developing a career in professional football. In its four years of existence, the all-star matchup has seen more than 400 of its participants sign NFL contracts.

This year's game will feature draft-eligible seniors with ties to the state of Texas taking on top seniors from around the nation. The game kicks off at 1 p.m. CST and will be nationally televised on CBS College Sports Network.

Tickets for the game are available at all Ticketmaster outlets (www.ticketmaster.com) as well as the Alamodome box office. Most seats are \$10; mid-field, lower-level premium seats are \$25 and include some free concessions.

The college all-star showdown has a long-standing tradition of community service, and this year's game continues that practice.

The NFLPA and Overtime Sports Southeast partnered with the San Antonio AFL-CIO to donate 1,000 youth footballs and 1,000 pink soccer balls to Toys for Tots, the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program and the Elf Louise Christmas Project for distribution in the San Antonio community.

Other community outreach events being held in connection with the game include a Feed the Children food distribution and motivational assemblies to area school children.

The new NFLPA Game was announced at a news event featuring **Kenny Hansmire**, president/CEO of Overtime Sports; NFLPA Assistant Executive Director **Clark Gaines**; NFLPA Senior Regional Director **Jason Belser**; and the head coaches for this year's game—former Dallas Cowboy great **Bill Bates** (for Team Texas) and former Atlanta Falcons Head Coach **Jerry Glanville** (for Team Nation). **Larry Coker**, Team Texas assistant coach and head football coach at the University of Texas at San Antonio; **Randy White**, Hall of Famer and NFLPA Game ambassador; and **Ray Mickens**, New York Jet and former Texas A&M standout, were also present for the announcement.

For more information, visit www.nflpagame.com.



NFLPA Player Advocate Scott Turner was in San Antonio for the holiday toy donation in conjunction with Overtime Sports Southeast and the San Antonio AFL-CIO. (Photo Provided)

NFL PLAYERS PULSE Awards Brings Added Energy to Super Bowl Week

By Jilane Rodgers

For the first time ever, NFL PLAYERS will hold its annual awards gala during Super Bowl week.

Adding to the festivities, this year's awards celebration will feature the all-new PULSE Awards, an exclusive event honoring players for their excellence on and off the field. The evening will be hosted by James Brown of CBS Sports' "The NFL Today," who also will present the annual JB Awards, honoring players' contributions to their communities.

Other highlights include:

- + a pre-show "green carpet" experience that mixes the energy and buzz of Oscar night with the personality of NFL players
- + exclusive access to players seated at tables throughout the room
- + presentation of the new Fan Choice Awards, which will recognize top vote-getters for their on-field accomplishments during the past season (see the list to the right)
- + presentation of the prestigious 45th Byron "Whizzer" White Award for outstanding service to one's team and community
- + A-list entertainment and pre- and post-party receptions

The show will take place Thursday, Feb. 3, at the Hyatt Regency Dallas. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Gene Upshaw Player Assistance Trust Fund, which provides financial support to professional and amateur football players or their immediate families in times of financial crisis.

Fan Choice Awards Added to the Program

This year, NFL PLAYERS gave fans across the nation the opportunity to vote for their favorite players from the 2010 season with the Fan Choice Awards, presented by EA SPORTS. Registered fan voters were also entered in a drawing to win various prizes, including two tickets to the PULSE Awards as well as signed memorabilia.

Fans were able to vote for their top pick in the following categories.

Emerging Player recognizes a player that has demonstrated a combination of great performance, character and maturity on and off the field, which together distinguish him as a "rising star" of the next generation of football greats.

Nominees were:

- **Sam Bradford**, St. Louis Rams
- **Josh Freeman**, Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- **DeSean Jackson**, Philadelphia Eagles
- **Clay Matthews**, Green Bay Packers
- **Matt Ryan**, Atlanta Falcons

Comeback Player recognizes a player who has overcome obstacles, adverse situations and/or injury with an outstanding performance and a spectacular comeback.

Nominees were:

- **Peyton Hillis**, Cleveland Browns
- **Terrell Owens**, Cincinnati Bengals
- **LaDainian Tomlinson**, New York Jets
- **Michael Vick**, Philadelphia Eagles
- **Wes Welker**, New England Patriots

Heart of the Game acknowledges a player for his determination and resilience on the field, enthusiasm and motivation from the sideline, and overall passion for the game of football. Nominees were:

- **Jared Allen**, Minnesota Vikings
- **Drew Brees**, New Orleans Saints
- **London Fletcher**, Washington Redskins
- **Ray Lewis**, Baltimore Ravens
- **Aaron Rodgers**, Green Bay Packers

For more information visit
www.pulseawards.com



(NFLPA)



(NFLPA)



(NFLPA)



(Kevin Koski/NFLPA)



(Kevin Koski/NFLPA)

SUPER BOWL XLV

WEEK FEB 2-6

DALLAS | TEXAS

FEBRUARY 2

WEDNESDAY

NFLPA DAY OF SERVICE



NIKE
NFL PLAYERS Live!
In the Community

Active and former NFL players team up with NIKE, Brewer Sports, International and volunteers to make a difference in the Dallas/Ft. Worth community during Super Bowl week.

Healthy Living Clinic

[9 a.m. - Noon]

Active and former NFL players and volunteers will assist students in planting a vegetable garden and teach students about healthy eating/living choices.

Feed The Children

[Noon - 3 p.m.]

Active and former NFL players and volunteers will unload and distribute food to at least 800 families.

Target School Library Makeover

[1 - 4:30 p.m.]

Active and former NFL players and volunteers join the NFLPA, The Heart of America Foundation and Target to renovate and revitalize libraries, encouraging children to take advantage of their library resources and to inspire reading and service learning.

FEBRUARY 3

THURSDAY

NFL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

Annual Press Conference

[3:15 p.m.]

The NFL Players Association holds its annual state of the union at the Super Bowl Media Center.

FEBRUARY 3

THURSDAY



NFL PLAYERS
PULSE AWARDS
Presented By EA SPORTS
& REEBOK
[6 - 10 p.m.]

For the first time, NFL PLAYERS moves its annual awards gala to Super Bowl week with the all-new PULSE Awards (Performance, Union, Leadership, Service, Excellence). The exclusive event honoring players for their excellence on and off the field will be hosted by James "JB" Brown of CBS Sports' "THE NFL TODAY" along with celebrity co-host Jay Mohr.

JB will present his annual awards for the players' contributions to their communities, and the NFLPA will present the prestigious 45th Byron "Whizzer" White Award for outstanding service to one's team and community.

Guests include current and former players, and a VIP pre-reception will be hosted by Deion Sanders. EA SPORTS Madden Bowl is the official after-party of the NFL PLAYERS PULSE Awards. Check www.PULSEAwards.com for more details.

FEBRUARY 4

FRIDAY

SUPER BOWL Gospel Celebration

[7:30 p.m.]

The 12th Annual Super Bowl Gospel Celebration welcomes back the NFL Players All-Star Choir, which features some of the most musically talented players in the league. For more information, visit www.superbowl-gospelcelebration.com.



NFL PLAYERS Party
Presented by REEBOK
[9 p.m.]

The annual NFL PLAYERS Party returns this year to celebrate the players and their accomplishments in red-carpet style. The private, invitation-only affair for active and former players is the most exclusive party of Super Bowl weekend.

FEBRUARY 5

SATURDAY

NFLPA SMOCKS & JOCKS

Jazz Brunch and Art Auction

[10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.]

Artwork created by current and former NFL players will be auctioned off during this special event. Ticket proceeds benefit the Gene Upshaw Players Assistance Trust Fund and the educational programs at the Dallas Museum of the Arts.

THE NFLPA GAME

[1 p.m.] @ The Alamodome in San Antonio

The NFLPA GAME invites top college athletes from universities coast to coast, showcase their skills to National Football League personnel. For more information visit www.nflpagame.com.



NFL PLAYERS
Premiere League
Presented by NIKE
[6:30 p.m.]

NFL PLAYERS Premiere League is a can't miss event for spectators looking for exciting football action on Super Bowl Eve in Dallas. Held at the NFL Experience, the game brings together former NFL players and celebrities in a flag football battle for gridiron supremacy.

FEBRUARY 6

SUNDAY



NFL PLAYERS
Legends Brunch
[10 a.m.]

VIPs will have the ultimate "breakfast of champions" at the inaugural Legends Brunch. The morning of Super Bowl XLV, NFL Legends and NFL Players Association Executive Director DeMaurice Smith will answer audience questions, featuring the Legends sharing their unique perspectives about football's biggest day.

*For more information regarding NFLPA / NFL PLAYERS events, please contact Jilane Rodgers (NFLPA) at Jilane.Rodgers@nflplayers.com or check www.nflplayers.com

schoolofthelegends.com

Social Networking, Training Videos & Other Football-Focused Content All Rolled Into One

By Megan McCarty & Jilane Rodgers

This fall, School of the Legends Football LLC (SOTL) and NFL PLAYERS joined forces to launch an interactive online community that allows players and fans to experience the game of football in an atmosphere like no other. Found at schoolofthelegends.com, this new media site features a range of resources, including a social networking interface that enables fans, players, coaches, parents and others to connect with each other and with the largest online community of NFL legends.

Kevin Carter, former NFL player and NFLPA Executive Committee member, serves as the website's host and spokesman. He explained the new site this way: "If you take a few different concepts—YouTube, Twitter, Facebook—roll them all into one, and make it about the players, coaches and fans of the great game of football that we all know and love—that's what schoolofthelegends.com is."

One section of the site, known as The School, features online training videos designed to allow young athletes and their coaches to watch the game's best drills performed by the game's best players. Standouts like running back **DeAngelo Williams** (Carolina Panthers) and tight end **Tony Gonzalez** (Atlanta Falcons) give unmatched insight on what it takes to succeed on the field at the highest level. The School section will soon also offer online courses specific to each position. This will include high-definition videos, classroom lessons, quizzes/tests, playbooks and a comprehensive final exam.

"School of the Legends is a valuable instrument for all aspiring athletes," said Keith Gordon, president of NFL PLAYERS. "With professional athletes demonstrating a variety of fundamental skills at each position, individuals can determine which styles match up with their own and incorporate those skills directly into their game. This tool is particularly useful for parents as they begin teaching kids about the basics of the game."

Another section of the website, Coach Mom & Dad, includes a variety of videos aimed at providing parents with the tools they need to engage in the game and become a valuable part of their son's extended football team. There's also a Health & Safety section that features videos and articles about the latest news in wellness, injury prevention and treatment, safety equipment and research.

"There is nothing like it," said David Byerley, CEO of School of the Legends Football. "There are some good football-related and fan sites around the nation, but none that bring it all together like schoolofthelegends.com."

SOTL, an officially licensed partner of the NFL PLAYERS, is involved in activities well beyond the online world. Its 45-foot tour bus visits NFL communities around the nation and Carter hosts a weekly radio program broadcast on stations in various NFL markets. Additionally, SOTL sponsored the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association's (TSSAA) Football Championships and will have a strong presence at Super Bowl in Dallas, including involvement in the NFL PLAYERS Premiere League flag football game.

You can follow SOTL on Facebook at [facebook.com/SchooloftheLegends](https://www.facebook.com/SchooloftheLegends) and via Twitter @SOTLNFL.



"There are some good football-related and fan sites around the nation, but none that bring it all together like schoolofthelegends.com."

David Byerley



School of the Legends made its mark in New Orleans during 2010 NFL Kickoff. The tour bus was stationed outside the Louisiana Superdome before the game, allowing fans to visit before watching the Saints take on the Vikings. (Kevin Koski/NFLPA)



NFL PLAYERS LICENSING COLLEGIATE-FOOTBALL APPAREL

New partnerships enable more independence from NFL.

By Megan McCarty

Due to the ongoing collective bargaining agreement negotiations, the Licensing Department of NFL PLAYERS has been expanding its partnerships, with a focus of becoming less reliant on the NFL.

One of NFL PLAYERS' latest licensing agreement is with Levelwear™, a brand division of The Accolade Group, to create a line of apparel featuring current NFL players in their college uniforms. It marks the first-ever line of NFL PLAYERS collegiate-licensed apparel.

"NFL PLAYERS is aggressively pursuing more of these types of programs that aren't dependent on NFL licenses," said NFL PLAYERS Vice President of Licensing and Apparel Pamela Adolph. "With a potential lockout on the horizon, these products can continue to bring in revenue regardless of our labor situation."

The Levelwear collection features players and their schools on T-shirts, sweatshirts, long-sleeve crew neck shirts and fashion tops. The line is available at select retail locations nationwide—including the college and pro markets of all players in the collection. Players currently included in the deal are **Drew Brees** (New Orleans Saints),

Kyle Orton (Denver Broncos), **Tim Tebow** (Denver Broncos), **Tony Romo** (Dallas Cowboys), **Hines Ward** (Pittsburgh Steelers), **Brett Favre** (Minnesota Vikings), **Dallas Clark** (Indianapolis Colts), **Ndamukong Suh** (Detroit Lions), **Randy Moss** (Tennessee Titans) and **Chris Johnson** (Tennessee Titans).

"The partnership between NFL PLAYERS and Levelwear is unique in that the product focuses on players' past collegiate achievements, not their current NFL careers," Adolph noted. "These memories are sealed in stone and aren't affected by injuries, trades or poor team performance that can kill sales—thus making their appeal evergreen."

The Levelwear product line features premium apparel for men, women and youth, embellished using the company's proprietary High Definition Lithography (HDL) technology. With this patent-pending technique, Levelwear is able to imprint photographic images in vivid color and amazing detail that have never before been possible, adding another unique facet to this unprecedented line of NFL PLAYERS collegiate-licensed apparel.

"Levelwear's HDL process brings a vibrancy and intensity to the images that

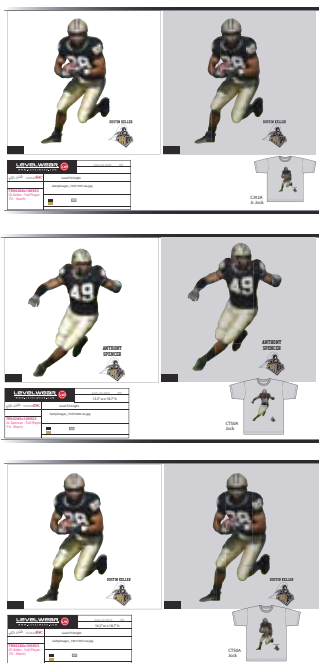
put this product at a whole new level within licensed sports apparel," said Adolph.

"We are excited about this partnership," she added. "It not only highlights a different aspect of players' talent and popularity, but its appeal extends beyond the NFL to a broader base of football fans. Regardless of which pro team fans root for, they will always be loyal to their alma mater and treasure the memories of watching their heroes in action."

NFL PLAYERS has established other collegiate licensing agreements that create independence from the league. The life-size wall graphics company, Fathead, is its largest collegiate licensee. Players featured in their college uniforms include **Drew Brees**, **Ray Lewis** (Baltimore Ravens), **Reggie Wayne** (Indianapolis Colts), **Tom Brady** (New England Patriots), **Charles Woodson** (Green Bay Packers) and **Adrian Peterson** (Minnesota Vikings).

Airborne Mobile is currently licensed for mobile wallpapers, and agreements are in the works with Coveroo, SkinIt (electronic device covers) and Photo File to add collegiate imagery to their product lines.

For more information visit levelwear.com



"With a potential lockout on the horizon, these products can continue to bring in revenue regardless of our labor situation."

Pamela Adolph

NFL PLAYERS LIVE! LEADERSHIP SERIES

Players Network With Business Execs

By Megan McCarty

As part of the new “The Heart of the Game” campaign, NFL PLAYERS Live! is presenting a series of networking events designed to connect active and former NFL players with local business executives across the country. These events offer players and business leaders a unique chance to exchange ideas, share experiences and network with like-minded professionals in an exclusive setting.

Networking sessions have already been held in Dallas, New York and Chicago, and participant response has been enthusiastic.

“We had a great dialogue and a great moderator,” said NFLPA Executive Committee Member **Tony Richardson** (New York Jets). “It put players in situations where we had opportunities to rub elbows with some of the heaviest hitters in all of business. It was great.”

The idea behind the NFL PLAYERS Live! Leadership Series is simple: to encourage players to grow their networking skills, empowering them to take their business careers in their own hands. For much of their careers, players’ marketing representatives or agents work to build their brands off the field. However, in his post-football career, a player must know how to represent himself.

“These events are designed to benefit current as well as former players who want to maximize their local networking opportunities and realize their potential in the communities in which they work, live and conduct business,” said Keith Gordon, president of NFL PLAYERS.

Former player **Greg Ellis** owns an all-inclusive production company and hopes his participation in the Leadership Series will connect him with executives who have the knowledge to help him take his business to the next level.

“Football can get you into a lot of doors,” said Ellis, “but once you get into those doors, you have to be the Real McCoy.”

Participating players and executives have already offered candid feedback to the NFL PLAYERS events and marketing team. The biggest takeaway, many noted, was realizing the striking similarities between the two groups.

“Many of the core fundamentals that made these business people successful are the same things that players have,” said Gordon, the series’ master of ceremonies. “They are enormously driven, they are entrepreneurial by nature, they’ve often got coaching or mentoring advice and they’ve had to deal with career change.”

Alumni of the Leadership Series are already seeing the gains.

“Now I have these executives in my network,” Richardson said. “You can go to school and get book knowledge, but if you have contacts, you are one step ahead of the game.”

NFL PLAYERS will host additional Leadership Series events throughout the nation during the offseason, providing more opportunities for players to develop vital business skills for their next careers.

For more information on the NFL PLAYERS Live! Series, contact the NFL PLAYERS Marketing and Events Department at 800-372-5535.

Active and former NFL players networked with business executives in Chicago in Dec. 16, 2010. (Colin Beckett/NFLPA)

The Leadership Series encourages players to grow their networking skills, empowering them to take their business careers in their own hands.



NFL PLAYERS Live! Leadership Series came to New York City Nov. 8, 2010. (Kevin Koski/NFLPA)

Sponsorship Spotlight

Here's a look at some of the latest affiliations between NFL PLAYERS and marketing partners.

National Dairy Council

As part of its partnership with the National Dairy Council (NDC), NFL PLAYERS proudly supported another successful year of the Fuel Up to Play 60 program.

Fuel Up to Play 60 is an in-school nutrition and physical activity program launched by NDC, Dairy MAX and the NFL, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Dairy MAX is a nonprofit organization affiliated with NDC and funded by dairy farming families in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and southwest Kansas. It is devoted to promoting dairy's lifelong health benefits and enjoyment of nutrient-rich foods such as low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt—as supported by the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The Fuel Up to Play 60 program encourages youth to consume nutrient-rich foods (low-fat and fat-free dairy foods, fruits, vegetables and whole grains) and do some sort of physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day.

As part of NFL PLAYERS' commitment to the Fuel Up to Play 60 program, Hall of Fame **Daryl Johnston** and linebacker and NFLPA Player Rep **Bradie James** (Dallas Cowboys) visited in the fall with one of the participating schools, George Bannerman Dealey Montessori Vanguard and International Academy in Dallas. The players talked to students about eating healthy and being active for at least 60 minutes a day as part of a school-wide pep rally to demonstrate the students' commitment to making their school a healthier place.

Michael Hinojosa, superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District, and Alan VanderHorst, a Texas dairy farmer, also spoke to the students about the importance of eating healthy and getting plenty of exercise.

James took his commitment to supporting the students' healthy habits one step further. He hosted a dinner for the students who had been on his winning team for an obstacle course relay held during the fall visit. Additionally, the students and NDC representatives were treated to watch James host his weekly radio show. As special thanks, the group presented James with a Fuel Up to Play 60 helmet signed by the students.

(AP Photo)



At the dinner, James talked about the importance of combating childhood obesity through the nutritional information provided by the NDC—and his experience as a first-time obstacle course coach.

Fuel Up to Play 60 empowers youth to take action for their own health by providing an opportunity to implement long-term, positive changes for themselves and their schools. With the support of many health and nutrition organizations—including Action for Healthy Kids, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dietetic Association, the National Hispanic Medical Association, the National Medical Association and the School Nutrition Association—the program reaches more than 70,000 schools across the country and plans to further its progress by expanding its reach and impact in the years to come.

Procter & Gamble

This year, Procter & Gamble increased its strong tie with the players of the NFL through key activations.

NFL PLAYERS matched players based on name-recognition and personality to the trusted everyday brands of Procter & Gamble, just as the group did when it connected Head & Shoulders with **Troy Polamalu** (Pittsburgh Steelers safety), whose distinctive Polynesian hair is now widely associated with the shampoo.

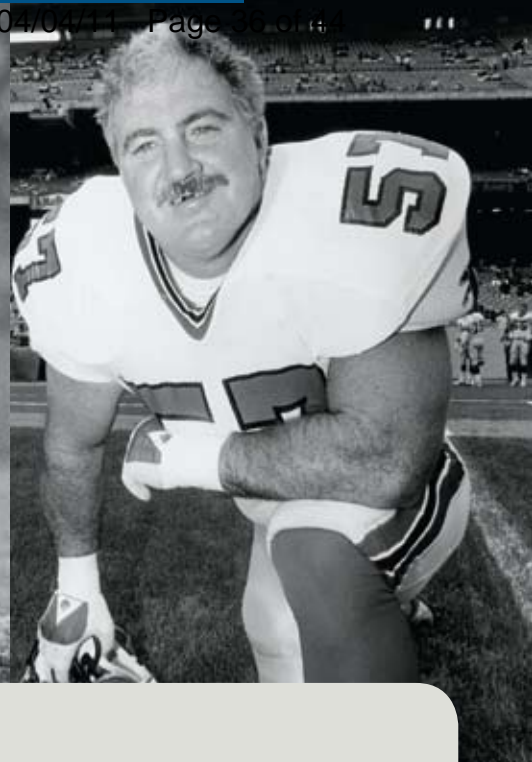
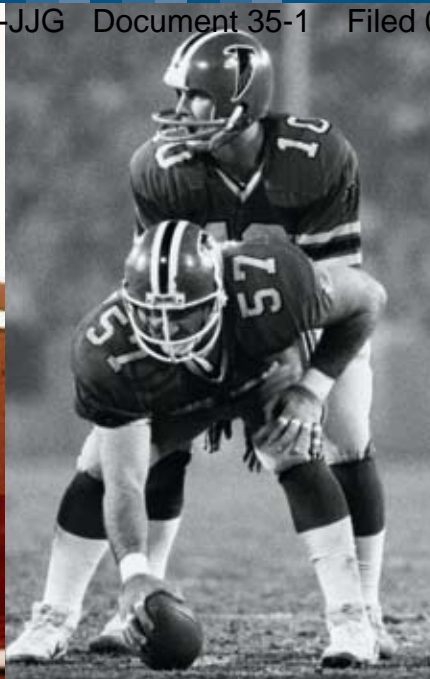
New creative spot matchups include:

- + Old Spice—Linebacker **Ray Lewis** (Baltimore Ravens)
- + Vicks—NFLPA Executive Committee Vice President Quarterback **Drew Brees** (New Orleans Saints), wide receiver **Chad Ochocinco** (Cincinnati Bengals), defensive lineman **Vince Wilfork** (New England Patriots) and tight end **Jason Witten** (Dallas Cowboys)
- + Prilosec OTC—Offensive tackle **David Diehl** (New York Giants) and offensive guard **Anthony Herrera** (Minnesota Vikings)
- + Gillette—Quarterback **Matt Ryan** (Atlanta Falcons) and running back **Ray Rice** (Baltimore Ravens)

Pepsi

This season, Pepsi MAX premiered a fun three-part series in which the Pepsi MAX route driver prepares for his own draft—in hopes of making the cola the Official Soft Drink of the NFL.

The first ad, titled “Winning Formula,” debuted during the 2010 season's Thanksgiving Day games and captures the driver going through combine-like drills with quarterback **Mark Sanchez** (New York Jets). In the second and third spots, titled “NFL Combine” and “NFL Draft,” former players **Deion Sanders**, **Rich Eisen** and **Mike Mayock** appear as draft analysts evaluating how the zero-calorie, maximum-Pepsi-taste cola performs in the challenge to be the Official Soft Drink of the NFL.



Duly Noted

A One-on-One Talk With Jeff Van Note

One of the Falcons' all-time greats and arguably the best center of his generation, Jeff Van Note is also a former union leader who played all 18 of his NFL seasons with Atlanta. He is an inductee into the Falcons' Ring of Honor whose No. 57 jersey is retired by the club. *The Huddle* talked with Van Note about his experiences in football and labor.

By Khalil Garriott

Can you talk about your history of involvement with the NFLPA?

I was the alternate rep, then I was a rep for a long time. I was the first vice president from about 1978 to 1982, and then I was president for a short period of time—when we made Gene Upshaw executive director. After I retired, I became a trustee of the retirement board.

Can you talk about that experience and how things have changed?

I think it was a great learning experience. I didn't know a lot about the union, what it meant, what it did or what benefits it provided. I was sort of naive. I think when a lot of players first get into pro football, they want to make the team and play, and their energies are mostly devoted that way. But after that, I saw what the divisiveness did among our own team, between those of us who crossed the picket line and those of us who stayed behind. I wanted to learn about what was going on. Everyone should learn as much as they can about the business they are involved in and the history.

What advice would you give to active players in regard to labor negotiations?

Most of all, it is your business, so make it a point to try to learn as much about it as you do about your skills in football. You try to

learn how to be the best player. Try to be the best businessman. Learn as much as you can about what is provided for you. So often, people rely just on their agents to do everything for them.

I played through three decades, from 1969 through 1986, so I've had a chance to witness the growth of the league, and I've witnessed even more in the last 24 years. I think it's so important that players learn as much as they can about the NFLPA, the collective bargaining agreement, what their rights are and what benefits they have coming to them when they leave the game. The length of the average career hasn't changed very much, but obviously the benefits have. More players are getting vested nowadays, which is great.

What's your feeling on the possibility of a lockout?

I'm pretty optimistic. ... It is an unbelievable business. It's what, a \$9 billion industry? Everybody knows there's a deal there. You prepare for the worst and bargain for the best, you know?

“

So often, people rely on their agents to do everything for them. ... It's so important that players learn as much as they can about what their rights are and what benefits they have coming to them when they leave the game.



All images—(AP Photo)

You recently went to the University of Kentucky for an alumni weekend. What was that like?

I was there for the South Carolina vs. Kentucky game. We had about 55 guys back and a lot of the wives. It's always nice to take a trip down memory lane and see people that you have spent time with in football.

We also had a Falcons reunion here in Atlanta. They had all the old Pro Bowl players come back, and we each got a jersey with our name on it and all got introduced at halftime. The Falcons, I think, have had 52 Pro Bowlers in their history, and 29 came back for it. It was nice to have some fellowship and see guys—plus enjoy the game itself. The Falcons beat the 49ers, and it's always good when they win.

How many Pro Bowls did you go to?

I went to six Pro Bowls. They drafted me as a linebacker and moved me to center. I played center my whole career.

Many NFLPA presidents have been centers and linemen. What's your take on a guy like Kevin Mawae, the current president?

Well, Kevin was a remarkable player. I had a great chance to watch him in his career with the Jets with Dan Henning, my last head coach. I used to love watching him pull around the line. It takes some ability to do that. It's just good to see the leadership he's been able to provide for the modern players.

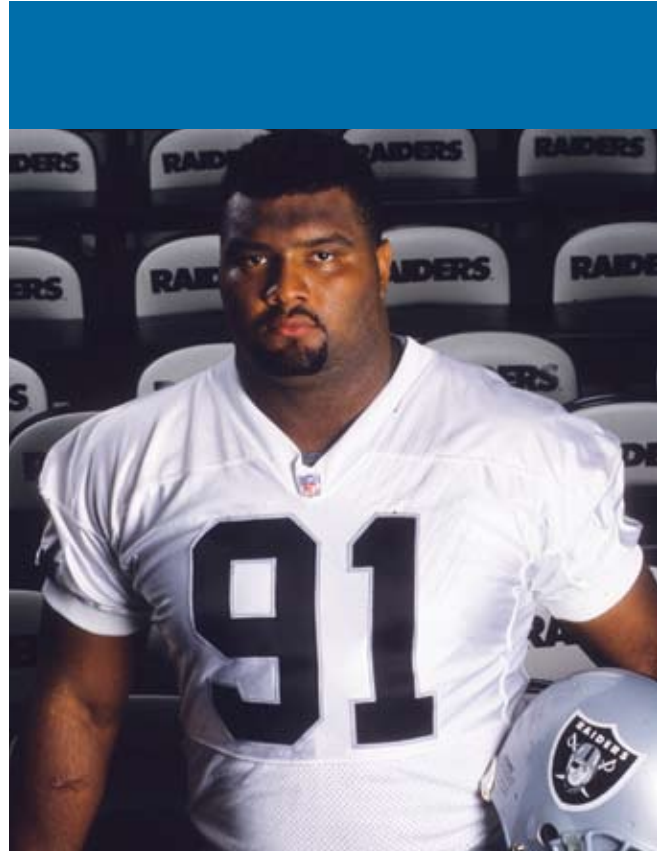
The 39 NFLPA Former Players Chapters.

Atlanta
Baltimore
Buffalo
Charlotte
Chicago
Cleveland
Columbus
Dallas
Denver
Detroit
Green Bay
Houston
Indianapolis
Jacksonville
Kansas City
Knoxville
Las Vegas
Los Angeles
Minnesota
Nashville
Nebraska
New England
New Orleans
New York/New Jersey
Northern California
Oklahoma City
Orlando
Philadelphia
Phoenix
Pittsburgh
Reno, Nev.
San Antonio/Austin
San Diego
Seattle
South Florida
Southwest Ohio
St. Louis
Tampa
Washington, D.C.

For chapter contact information,
log in to NFLPlayers.com or call
the Former Players Services
Department at 800-372-2000.

FORMER PLAYERS CHAT THINGS UP

Several former players have fielded questions from fans on NFLPlayers.com's new live chats feature. Here, we share a few choice tidbits from recent online discussions.



Chester McGlockton

Position: Defensive Tackle

Years in League: 1992-2003

Joe: How did you like going to California for the pros after growing up on the East Coast?

It was a major change for me because I grew up in a small town with about 6,000 people and then went to Clemson with a student population of about 5,000 ... It was a culture shock going to Los Angeles in 1992 with the riots that were going on after the Rodney King incident. My mom raised me well so I had good morals and a good background, which made it easier for me, but it was still a culture shock.

Alex: As a former player, what do you think about the upcoming lockout? How will it affect you?

I'm a fan as well, so from that perspective, I don't want a lockout to happen. As a retired player, it would affect my benefits. I'm a positive person, so I believe a deal will get worked out. As a former union rep, as long as we stand together and believe in the same goals, we'll get it worked out and be playing in September next year.

All images—(AP Photo)

**Cornelius Bennett**

Position: Linebacker

Years in League: 1987-2000

Howard: What would you like to see most come out of a new CBA for former players?

Well, definitely I'd like to see an increase in pensions. A lot of people talk about health care, but most guys talk about pension increases.

Kelly: Do you think most former players are aware of the options that are out there for them? Obviously with your experience with the NFLPA you know, but do others? I know the PA is offering many assistance programs.

We have done a better job of trying to communicate. But there are a lot of guys that are out there who don't know about the programs. So we're still trying to find those guys to get them back in the know and help them through the tough times. It's those guys from your locker room who are struggling. We're trying to better educate former players. There are other groups out there trying to help former players, and I think it's good that we're getting players' attention to try and make a better way for former players.

**Eddie Kennison III**

Position: Wide Receiver

Years in League: 1996-2008

Tommy P.: What do you miss most about playing?

Wow. I think this holds true for all men who play in the NFL—they miss the camaraderie with all of the guys that they played with. You spend a lot of time with them, and once you leave the NFL environment, you lose touch with some of them.

Megan: Are you involved in any community service?

That's a great question. My foundation, The Eddie Kennison Foundation (www.eddiekennisonfoundation.com), deals with Lupus research. My wife was diagnosed with Lupus in 2003 so my foundation does a lot of work in terms of research. I also do a lot of work with other players' organizations that help raise money and promote different causes.

quirino: What do you think about the new bargaining agreement that the NFLPA is looking for?

The players really make the business the way it is, and if the owners do not listen to their employees, the business will fail. That holds true with any business.

NFL Owners Claims Lack Substance

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

By Nick Murphy

NFL owners would love for the public to believe that clubs are losing millions upon millions of dollars because of escalating player costs. The reality is that player expenses increased only 4 percent in 2009 and only half of that was salary-related. (The other 2 percent came from rising costs in player benefits.)

Meanwhile, the average value of an NFL franchise increased by \$693 million—or 338 percent—from 1996 to 2007, according to National Sports Law Institute of Marquette University Law School. Average values increased again in 2008 and 2009, and then dipped slightly in 2010, landing the average NFL club value at a whopping \$1.02 billion going into 2010, as noted in *Forbes* magazine.

This makes the average NFL club worth more than double the average Major League Baseball club and nearly triple that of typical National Basketball Association and National Hockey League clubs—all leagues with guaranteed player salaries and substantial post-career benefits.

According to *Forbes*, player expenditures have nothing to do with the first decrease in average NFL club valuations in 12 years. Instead, the magazine cites the obvious factor of the nation's economic downturn—which has cut non-broadcasting revenue and reduced demand for team acquisitions—as the primary reason for the small devaluation among certain clubs. The publication also points out that not all teams lost value; several have continued to gain value despite the market.

Compared with executives in other businesses in this economic climate, NFL owners should be ecstatic that they've grown their investments by an average of 338 percent over the last decade, while only passing a modest percentage of annual revenue—and not equity—on to the players that make their businesses profitable.



NFL owners should be ecstatic that they've grown their investments by an average of 338 percent over the last decade.

That's apparently not enough for them, however. To the owners, it's all about exit strategy—making their businesses even more valuable in anticipation of the day they're ready to sell. Thus, as they hem and haw with the players over minute increases or decreases in revenue share, they're also out taking advantage of loopholes that allow them to take out “loans” to build new stadiums that nearly double their franchise valuations, while resting easy due to guaranteed TV money—with or without a single game in 2011.

The owners' refusal to open up their books and prove that they are losing money is the most obvious red flag as to the validity of their claimed losses. The fact that there have only been two NFL clubs sold since 2006 (the St. Louis Rams and the Miami Dolphins) also seems contrary to that claim. It strikes me as odd that out of 32 billionaire businessmen with pristine records of

financial decision-making, nearly 94 percent of them have chosen to hold investments that are “losing money” rather than liquefying their club assets to realize previous years' profits (which have averaged \$673 million over the last 10 years).

With a lockout a distinct possibility for 2011, it's more critical than ever that players unite to fight for what is fair. The owners are the ones who opted out of the collective bargaining agreement that players were prepared to honor. In the spirit of honest and equitable negotiation, I hope to see the owners either show us their books, or tell us the truth about why they want to re-negotiate the CBA in the first place.

The owners' refusal to open up their books and prove that they are losing money is the most obvious red flag as to the validity of their claimed losses.



(Photo Provided)

Nick Murphy is a former NFL punter who spent time on the Minnesota Vikings, Philadelphia Eagles, Baltimore Ravens and Kansas City Chiefs. He also played in NFL Europe, where he was named an all-league selection in consecutive seasons. After last playing in 2005, Murphy earned his MBA from Arizona State University and currently works with professional athletes, assisting them in their transition into the business world.

LET US PLAY

With the NFL at the top of its game, players just want to understand the owners' need for a new agreement—and be back to work next season.

(Kevin Koski/NFLPA)

By George Atallah

This column originally ran on ESPN.com Jan. 6, 2011.

The current collective bargaining agreement between the NFL players and owners that was signed in 2006 will expire on March 3. In May 2008, NFL owners opted out of the agreement early. The players want to play a full NFL season in 2011 and have offered to extend the current deal in an effort to work out a long-term deal without an interruption of league operations.

The players haven't asked for anything more and literally don't want anything more. They have asked simply to play under the existing agreement.

The NFL is at the height of its popularity and success. According to recent reports, the NFL and ESPN are close to a nearly \$2 billion renewal for the rights to "Monday Night Football." In 2010, 65 of the top 100 most-watched sporting events in the U.S. were NFL games. Eighteen of the top 20 viewed telecasts this television season were NFL games (and we hadn't even seen the playoffs as of this writing).

Revenues are up. Sponsorships are up. Every television ad for this year's Super Bowl was sold months ago. All signs and indicators point to extraordinary success and rapid growth for the business of football.

According to the NFL and team owners, however, the "economic model in the NFL doesn't work." What's more, they have prepared for and are openly threatening a lockout if it's not "fixed." What is their proposal to fix it? They've asked the players for more than a \$1 billion reduction in the players' portion of revenues in the first year alone of a future CBA. Oh, and by the way—in a league with no guaranteed contracts, but with revealed dangers of the game and injury concerns at their peak—they also want players to play two extra regular-season games.

The players maintain that one fundamental question needs to be answered in earnest if there is to be an agreement before a lockout: Why is the current deal so bad? If owners had decided to make this a direct business transaction between partners, the players are confident a deal would've been struck a long time ago. Business partners get together, sign confidentiality agreements, exchange financials and negotiate. Our repeated requests for detailed financial information that would help us answer the quintessential question have been denied.

As a result, players and fans have to go by what we do know. I recently sent a letter to all sports editors to set the record straight on the economics and revenue breakdown between players and owners because the phrase most frequently seen is, "players get 60 percent of revenues." This is not an accurate depiction. Players

receive approximately 50 percent of all revenues in the NFL. Or, players receive approximately 60 percent of total revenue in the NFL after the owners take a number of expense credits that add up to more than \$1 billion a year.

This is significant because the past 10 years of financial data at the highest levels show that the players' portion of revenues has slightly decreased. Simply put, the available data directly contradict the rationale and explanation of the NFL's justification for a rollback or, worse, a lockout. An unjustified lockout not only would prevent players from playing and fans from watching but also would have real negative economic consequences on NFL team cities.

The players have asked repeatedly for financial transparency and economic information. We have been told publicly and privately that detailed financials are "none of your business." In an era of greater financial transparency, this is confusing. Frankly, it signals that this negotiation is about something much different from figuring out how to work together to secure the future of the game.

For example, the owners have been clamoring for a rookie wage scale. They cited "exploding" rookie contracts as a reason for opting out early in 2008. The players offered up a proposal to address owners' concerns called the proven performance plan. The NFL said No based on an unwillingness to guarantee that the saved rookie money would go toward proven veteran players.

It's a shame that nearly 1,000 days after the NFL owners opted out of the CBA, they can't guarantee NFL games next year. It's a shame that heading into the Super Bowl this unresolved issue continues to steal headlines. It's a shame that the owners are threatening to prevent players from playing football. It's a shame that the unanswered question remains: Why is this deal so bad?

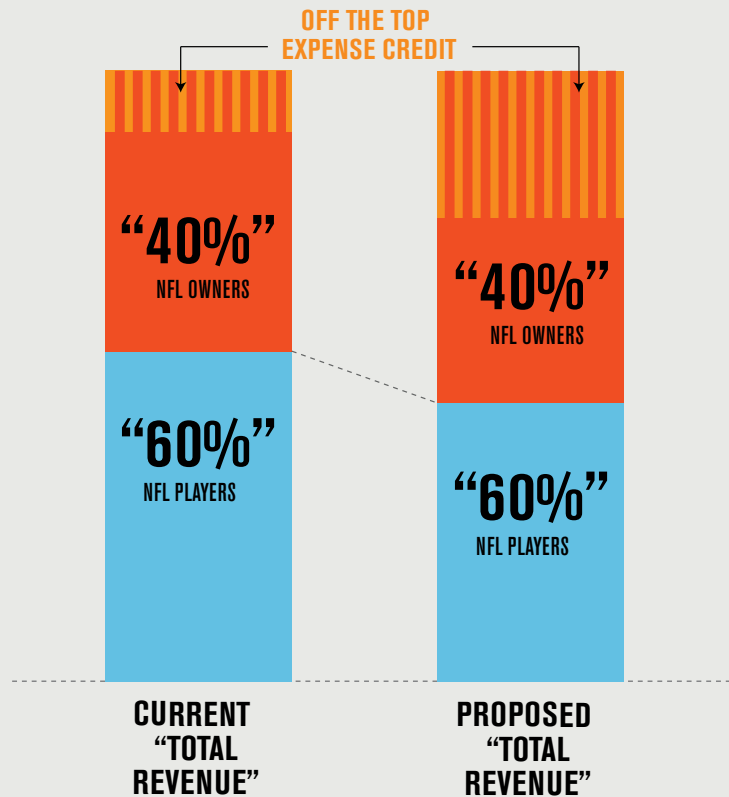
The NFL players have asked me to share a simple request on their behalf: Open the books and let us play.

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"An unjustified lockout not only would prevent players from playing and fans from watching but also would have real negative economic consequences on NFL team cities."

IF THE EXPENSE CREDIT NEARLY DOUBLES, THE PLAYERS ARE THE ONES WHO LOSE



Debunking the 60-Percent Myth

It's time to set the record straight on the revenue breakdown between NFL players and owners. Currently, the phrase most frequently used to describe the division is, "Players get 60 percent of revenues." This is not an accurate depiction.



60% of LESS is... LESS.

Terminology makes the revenue numbers tricky. There are two terms being tossed around that are distinct and not synonymous: "all revenue" and "total revenue." All revenue refers to all the revenues generated by the NFL and its operations. Total revenue

is a term used in collective bargaining agreement negotiations, and refers to all of the monies that are left after the owners directly pocket an expense credit—which has exceeded \$1 billion in each of the past two years, and which owners are now seeking to increase dramatically.

The correct characterization of the revenue breakdown is this: Players receive approximately 50 percent of *all revenue* in the NFL. Or, players receive less than 60 percent of *total revenue* after the owners take expense credits off the top.

What's more, owners are demanding to nearly double their off-the-top expense credit—even as they tell players that their financial documents are "None of your business." This move would shrink the pie from which players draw their share of revenue, forcing them to take an 18-percent cut, without any attempts by the owners for justification!



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